

# LEARNING CHINESE

## A FOUNDATION COURSE IN MANDARIN



in four parts

- I. Units 1-4 / Chars 1-3
- II. Units 5-7 / Chars 4-6
- III. Units 8-10 / Chars 7
- IV. Units 11-12 / Menu supplement

Julian K. Wheatley  
MIT

© 2007

*Please do not reproduce without permission*



**Yǒngwǎng zhíqián ('bravely go forwards')**  
**'Onwards and upwards!'**

*The author gratefully acknowledges initial support from  
The Consortium for Language Teaching and Learning.*

## **Genesis and acknowledgements**

Drafts for the first few lessons of *Learning Chinese: A Foundation Course in Mandarin* started to appear as long as six years ago, and since that time it has been completely revamped at least twice, and then additionally revised or re-ordered two or three times. The resulting work has been used in near final form for several years in the beginning and intermediate courses of MIT's regular Chinese language program, and over the past few years, has been made available to the public through MIT's OpenCourseWare. (Chinese IV, the last segment, goes online in April 2007.)

It is not exaggeration to say that everyone associated with MIT's Chinese language program over the last five or six years has contributed in some way to the final product. Students and teachers have gamely put up with earlier versions, some of them appearing just-in-time, with no small number of typos and errors. It helped to be writing in the new millennium, when pinyin and character material could be produced electronically with proper formatting and illustrations, then easily revised and delivered to students from course websites. It also helped to be at an institution where there was enthusiasm for novelty and experimentation.

My colleagues in the Chinese language program throughout the years that this book was being developed have been Tong Chen (陈彤), who started at MIT when I began there ten years ago, and Jin Zhang (张锦), who joined our small group a few years later. Tong Chen provided the raw text for many of the conversations and narratives in the later units of the book: conversation 9.3 on bargaining for example, the recipe in 11.5, and the long narratives on kinship, the Chinese school system, and on his hometown, Tianjin, all in Unit 12. He also contributed much of the background information and the first version of the long dialogue in the supplementary Menu lesson.

Jin Zhang provided the stroke-order appendices at the end of every character lesson, and both she and Tong Chen, in addition to providing raw material, also helped to improve almost all of the Chinese texts, thought up apt examples, noted mistakes in the Chinese, and made suggestions on the basis of their broad language teaching experience. Min-min Liang (梁敏敏), who had taught with us briefly before rejoining the program as the book neared completion, not only edited some of the later material, but scrupulously reported errors and typos in the late units as she used them to teach Chinese IV. And Amy Liang (梁爱萍), who attended a good number of the classes when the new materials were being used, joined me for tea for many afternoons at 'Au Bon Pain' so that I could grill her for examples and check on usage.

Thanks also go to: Li Yongyan (李咏燕) from Nanjing, and later, City University of Hong Kong, for gathering examples of nursery rhymes, jingles and light verse from her friends for use in the Rhymes and Rhythms section of each Unit; and to Jordan Gilliland, who as an undergraduate and graduate student at MIT, developed the multifaceted flashCube program that, among its many functions, has allowed students to test themselves on the material in *Learning Chinese*.

Finally, I must acknowledge the people who made this enterprise possible in the first place, the teachers who covered the same ground as *Learning Chinese* when I was an undergraduate student at Columbia University and gave me my foundation in Mandarin: Chih Ping C. Sobelman (蘇張之丙) and Roger Yeu (樂亦平).

Where friends and colleagues have provided dialogue or narrative material for the book, I have tried to remember to acknowledge them by name. Even though I did not always take their advice, and frequently injected my own idiosyncratic views into the final product, their willingness to assist and discuss issues has made the book much better than it would otherwise have been.

Enrollments in Chinese classes increased regularly over the years I taught Chinese at MIT, so that I am unlikely to be able to recall the names of all those students who deserve to be noted for contributions over and above the normal enthusiasm and resilience that almost all my students have brought to the task of learning Chinese. So at the risk of omitting a few names, let me cite Kevin A. McComber, who carefully checked through a number of units and provided useful feedback, and Justin M. Paluska and Erwan M. Mazarico who over the course of several semesters, regularly sent me lists of typos and other infelicities that they noted in their perusal of the materials.

After teaching Chinese for so long and – in the time honored fashion of language teachers -- preparing supplementary materials for fine textbooks written by others, I decided it was time to write my own so that I could indulge my own preferences. The result is this book. My hope is that there will be pleasure in it for both students and their teachers.

子曰，知之者，不如好之者，好之者不如乐之者。  
Zǐ yuē, zhī zhī zhě, bùrú hào zhī zhě, hào zhī zhě bùrú lè zhī zhě!

The Master [Confucius] said:

‘Knowing it is not as good as love for it; love for it is not as good as delight in it.’

## **Preface**

### **The essential features of *Learning Chinese: A Foundation Course in Mandarin.***

Learning Chinese can be divided into four parts: Units 1-4 with Character lessons 1-3; Units 5-7 with Character lessons 4-6; Units 8-10 with Character lesson 7; and Units 11 and 12. The Character lessons at the point where students can read sufficiently well to make use of graded readers of the sort already available. In addition, there is a chapter that provides some general background to the language, a preliminary lesson on the sounds and their transcription, and an appendix on the Chinese menu. Ten essential features of the book are listed below:

*1. It is for a diverse audience.*

The book is intended for a diverse audience, specialist and non-specialist alike. But it is particularly conceived for the latter group, for whom language courses are the major source of knowledge of China as well as Chinese. Such students need a course that not only guides them towards basic conversational and literary skills, but also stimulates their curiosity about the linguistic setting of the language and the geography, history and culture of the lands where it is spoken. On completing *Learning Chinese*, students will have a solid foundation for further study of the language, whether in a specialized program of Chinese studies, or in conjunction with work or further study in a Chinese speaking country.

*2. It has a discursive style, with content woven into units.*

The textbook proceeds discursively, with content organized in units that are made up of a dozen or more topics. A unit (including the character portion) may take three weeks or longer to complete. This approach makes it possible to introduce a wealth of interconnected material that can form the basis of engaging conversations and interesting narratives. So, for example, the final unit of Part 1 introduces (among other things) time phrases, names and titles, introductions and subjects of study. These are practiced piecemeal in the early classes; but later, they are woven together along the lines of the culminating dialogue of that unit (in which a Chinese businessman strikes up a conversation with an overseas student on a bus in Sichuan). Within each lesson, topics are selected so students can build up a conversational repertoire that can be practiced, personalized, and extended from lesson to lesson.

*3. It is intellectually stimulating.*

The textbook is exuberant rather than restrained. Its Chinese content is current and lively, with subjects that range from ordering food to bargaining, from visiting temples to discussing conditions in Tibet. It is also larded with quotations, rhymes, popular culture, linguistic information, and historical and geographical notes. It is intended to be an intellectually stimulating resource for both students and teachers alike.

*4. Its contents are easily transformed into classroom activities.*

The selection and ordering of topics is based on the author's experience learning and teaching Chinese over several decades. It is guided by what the beginning student is likely to encounter in and out of the classroom setting, as well as by the need to provide a broad foundation of grammatical, lexical and cultural information for future work in Chinese. It mixes practical topics, such as providing biographical information, buying train tickets, or giving toasts, with topics of general interest, such as geography, regional languages and brand names. Such topics are easily enriched with online materials (such as satellite maps, photographs, video clips and advertisements); they are also easy to transform into effective classroom activities.

*5. It can be used for self-instruction.*

With occasional help from a Chinese speaker, particularly in the early stages, *Learning Chinese* can serve as a manual for self-instruction. It introduces the language systematically; it has extensive explanations about grammar and usage, as well as suggestions about how to learn the material; it provides a pathway for the inductive learning of characters; it comes with the *flashCube* learning and testing program (see #10); and it can be accessed electronically, with a selection of audio files and other materials from MIT's OpenCourseware.

*6. Its character lessons can be omitted or used independently.*

Chinese is learned more effectively when the enormous task of learning to read in characters is separated from the task of learning the sounds, lexicon, grammar and usage of the language. Because *Learning Chinese* separates character reading from other aspects of learning the language, students who wish to study or review the colloquial language without reference to characters can ignore the character components; while those with sufficient grammatical knowledge can study the character material alone.

*7. It emphasizes reading skills over writing; it teaches simplified and traditional characters simultaneously.*

The character lessons focus on learning to read in characters. Writing is encouraged for its aesthetic qualities, and as a way to draw attention to the distinguishing features of characters; so is word processing, which makes use of character recognition skills. But the emphasis is on reading. Rather than selecting one character set as primary (or offering separate versions of character material), both the traditional and the simplified are introduced simultaneously. Given the fact that the majority of characters have either only one form or very similar forms, learning to read both is quite feasible. For writing purposes, however, students should probably choose one or the other as their primary medium.

*8. It uses an inductive approach to promote character reading.*

The character lessons are placed at the end of each unit so that, for the most part, the language represented by the characters is already familiar. Within the lessons, characters are exemplified first in compounds and phrases, then in sentences, dialogues, and narratives, as well as in data sets that present information in tabular form. The approach is inductive. It attempts to provide enough context at each step to make reading possible, and to thereby ease the process of familiarization and discourage studying from isolated lists.

*9. It accommodates supplementary material.*

*Learning Chinese* is envisioned as the foundation text for a sequence of Chinese language courses, but although it is comprehensive in its coverage, it can easily accommodate traditional or online supplements of the kind that teachers use to enrich a course and make it their own. Nowadays, such materials range from podcasts for listening and blogs for reading to voice-over-IP telephony for actual conversation. These tools can enrich the learning environment but their effectiveness still depends on a strong foundation of linguistic and cultural knowledge.

*10. It is accompanied by a learning/testing program called flashCube.*

Assistance in internalizing lesson material is provided by way of a computer program called *flashCube*, developed by Jordan Gilliland while a student at MIT. As the name suggests, *flashCube* delivers through the medium of the computer what has traditionally been provided by tools such as flashcards, vocabulary and phrase notebooks, and tape recorders. *flashCube* stores, in a compact and convenient format, much of the Chinese material presented in the book, and allows learners to test themselves into and out of spoken or written Chinese. At their own convenience learners can test themselves on words, phrases, or sentences, randomly or in sequence, until they are familiar with them. The classroom can then be reserved for more naturalistic practice, for fine tuning, and for dealing with special difficulties. *flashCube* comes with a host of other useful functions that allow the creation of individualized data bases, or instant access to web-based encyclopedic information.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS (Part 1)**

### **Background (15 pp)**

#### *1. China*

China  
Chinese places

#### *2. Chinese speech*

Chinese  
Mandarin  
The origins of Mandarin (speech)  
Varieties of Mandarin  
Regional languages or ‘topolects’

#### *3. The written language*

Written Mandarin  
From Classical Chinese to modern written Chinese  
Characters  
Traditional and simplified characters  
Homophony  
Transcribing sound in characters  
Pictographs, ideographs, logographs  
Representing the sounds of Chinese  
Hànyǔ Pīnyīn

#### *4. Key Terms*

#### *5. Further Reading and References*

### **Sounds and symbols (18 pp)**

#### *1 The syllable*

- 1.1 Sound versus symbol (letter)
- 1.2 The syllable

Ex. 1

#### *2 Tones*

- 2.1 The 4 tones
- 2.2 Tone concepts
- 2.3 The low-tone
- 2.4 The tone chart
- 2.5 On the history of Mandarin tones

Ex. 2



*3 Initial consonants*

- 3.1 The consonant chart
- 3.2 Notes Ex. 3a,b
- 3.3 An expanded chart of initials

*4 Rhymes*

- 4.1 Notes on the rhymes Ex. 4
- 4.2 The value of the letter ‘e’ Ex. 5a,b
- 4.3 The ‘o’ rhymes: ou versus uo / o Ex. 6a,b
- 4.4 The ü-rhymes

*5 Miscellany*

- 5.1 Tonal shifts
- 5.2 Low-tone shift
- 5.3 Two single-word shifts
- 5.4 The apostrophe

*6 Writing connected text in pinyin*

*7 Recapitulation* Ex. 7a-h

**UNIT 1 (24 pp)**

*1.1 Conventions*

*1.2 Pronunciation*

*1.3 Numbering and ordering*

- 1.3.1 The numbers, 1 – 10
- 1.3.2 Beyond 10
- 1.3.3 The ordinal numbers
- 1.3.4 Dates
- 1.3.5 The celestial stems

*1.4 Stative Verbs*

- 1.4.1 Types of verbs
- 1.4.2 Questions and positive responses
- 1.4.3 Negative responses
- 1.4.4 V-not-V questions
- 1.4.5 Three degrees of response

*1.5 Time and tense*

- 1.5.1 Today, yesterday and tomorrow
- 1.5.2 SVs plus le

*1.6 Pronouns*

1.6.1 Names

1.6.2 The particle ne and the adverb yě

Ex. 1

*1.7 Action verbs*

1.7.1 Negative statements, with méiyǒu

1.7.2 Positive statement, with le

1.7.3 Questions

1.7.4 Summary of *le*-patterns

1.7.5 Mini-conversations

*1.8 Conventional Greetings*

1.8.1 The addition of guo

1.8.2 Reductions

Ex. 2a,b

*1.9 Greeting and taking leave*

1.9.1 Names and titles

1.9.2 Hello

1.9.3 Goodbye

1.9.4 Bon voyage

1.9.5 Smoothing the transitions

*1.10 Tones*

1.10.1 Tone combos (the first 6)

1.10.2 Tone lock

1.10.3 The first ‘rule of 3’

Ex. 3a-e

*1.11 Summary*

*1.12 Rhymes and Rhythms*

Dà dùzi

Xiǎo kēdǒu

**Chars 1 (23 pp); character sheets (6 pp)**

*1.1 General features of Chinese texts*

1.1.1 Size

1.1.2 Spacing

1.1.3 Punctuation

1.1.4 Direction

*1.2 The form of characters*

1.2.1 Radicals and phonetics

1.2.2 Simplified characters

*1.3 Function*

*1.4 Writing*

1.4.1 Writing in the age of word processors

1.4.2 Principles of drawing characters

a) Form b) Direction c) Order d) Two illustrative characters

*1.5 Presentation of characters*

*1.6 Numbers*

Ex. 1a,b

*1.7 Dates*

Ex. 2a,b

*1.8 Days*

Ex. 3

*1.9 Surnames and pronouns*

1.9.1 Reading

Ex. 4a,b

*1.10 More pronouns and function words*

1.10.1 Reading

*1.11 SVs and associated function words*

1.11.1 Phrases (simplified set, traditional set)

1.11.2 Reading

*1.12 Action verbs and associated function words*

1.12.1 Phrases (simplified set, traditional set)

Ex. 5

1.12.2 Reading (simplified set, traditional set)

*1.13 On the streets*

**Unit 2 (31 pp)**

*2.1 Pronunciation*

*2.2 Adverbs*

2.2.1 Tài with le

2.2.2 Other adverbs

2.2.3 Intensifying or backing off

2.2.4 Conjunctions

2.3 *More SVs*

2.3.1 Questions with zěnmeyàng ‘how [is it]’

2.3.2 Examples

2.3.3 Juéde ‘feel; think’

2.3.4 Zěnmeyàng as a greeting

Ex. 1

2.4 *Nouns and modification*

2.4.1 Measure-words

2.4.2 Possessive pronouns

2.4.3 Demonstrative pronouns

Ex. 2

2.5 *Identity*

2.5.1 Questions

2.5.2 Hedging your answer

2.5.3 Naming

Ex. 3

2.6 *Names and titles*

2.6.1 Names

2.6.2 Xìng

2.6.3 Jiào

2.6.4 Asking and giving a name

2.6.5 Titles

2.6.6 Shì with names

Ex. 4a,b

2.7 *Location and existence*

2.7.1 Some Chinese place names

2.7.2 Proximity (lí...yuǎn/jìn)

2.7.3 Zài ‘be+at’

2.7.4 Zài as a main verb; zài as a co-verb

2.7.5 The verb yǒu ‘have’

Ex. 5

2.8 *Miscellany*

2.8.1 Welcome

2.8.2 Particles

2.8.3 Praise

2.9 *Dialogue: at the airport*

2.9.1 Airports and airlines

Ex. 6a,b

2.10 *Reflections: What have you learned?*

2.10.1 Words

2.10.2 Meaning

*2.11 Pinyin notes and practice*

2.11.1 Toneless syllables

2.11.2 A pinyin quirk

2.11.3 Tone combos (the next 6)

Ex. 7a,b

*2.12 Summary*

*2.13 Rhymes and rhythms*

Yì zhī qīngwā

Dà jiǎo

Ràokǒuling ‘tongue twisters’

**Chars 2 (26 pp); character sheets (7 pp)**

*2.0 Review*

*2.1 First set*

2.1.1 Phrases

Ex. 1

*2.2 Second set*

2.2.1 Compounds

Ex. 2

2.2.2 Set 1 in traditional characters

*2.3 Third set*

2.3.1 Compounds

Ex. 3

2.3.2 Set 2 in traditional characters

*2.4 Fourth set*

2.4.1 Compounds

2.4.2 Set 3 in traditional characters

2.4.3 Reading (narrative and dialogue)

Ex. 4

*2.5 Form of characters*

2.5.1 Representational characters

2.5.2 Additive characters – or blends

2.5.3 Phonosemantic characters

2.5.4 Character retrieval

2.5.5 An illustration

2.6 *Miscellany*

2.6.1 Tone sets

2.6.2 Set 4 in traditional characters

2.7 *On the street #2*

**Unit 3 (39 pp)**

3.1 *Pronunciation: initials of rows 3 and 4*

3.2 *Amount*

3.2.1 Larger numbers

3.2.2 Some more measure phrases

3.3 *Nationality*

3.3.1 Country names

3.3.2 Asking about nationality

3.3.3 Foreigners

3.3.4 Have you been there? *V-guo*

3.3.5 More on proximity

3.4 *The cardinal directions: NSEW*

Ex. 1

3.4.1 Dialogues

3.5 *Yes and no*

3.5.1 Negative questions

3.5.2 Tag-questions

3.5.3 Is it the case that...?

Ex. 2

3.6 *Thanks and sorry*

3.6.1 Responses to thanking

3.6.2 Sorry

3.6.3 Refusal

3.6.4 Don't

Ex. 3

3.7 *Things to drink*

Ex. 4

3.7.1 Dialogue (Shéi a?)

3.8 *Why, because, so*

3.8.1 A lot of

Ex. 5

3.9 *Money*

3.9.1 Dollars and cents

Ex. 6

3.9.2 How many?

3.9.3 Making a purchase

Ex. 7

3.10 *Other numbered sets*

- 3.10.1 Telephone numbers
- 3.10.2 Days of the week
- 3.10.3 Days of the month
- 3.10.4 Siblings
- 3.10.5 Yígòng ‘altogether; in all’

Ex. 8

3.11 *Courses and classes*

- 3.11.1 Subjects of study
- 3.11.2 Talking about classes
- 3.11.3 Moveable adverbs (dāngrán; yídìng)
- 3.11.4 Question words as indefinites

Ex. 9

3.12 *Dialogue: courses and classes*

Ex. 10

3.13 *Sounds and Pinyin*

- 3.13.1 Tone combos (the last 3 sets)
- 3.13.2 Initials

Ex. 11a,b,c

3.14 *Summary*

Ex. 12

3.15 *Rhymes and Rhythms*

Dà tóu, dà tóu; Tū tóu, tū tóu  
Sānlúchē, pǎo+de kuài

*Appendix: Countries and nationalities*

**Chars 3 (24 pp); character sheets (7 pp)**

3.0 *Review*

(*fantizi*, radicals and phonetics, fill-in-the-blanks)

3.1 *First set*

- 3.1.1 Phrases
- 3.1.2 Short descriptions

Ex. 1

3.2 *Second set*

- 3.2.1 Phrases
- 3.2.2 Set 1 in traditional characters

Ex. 2

3.3 *Third set*

- 3.3.1 Phrases
- 3.3.2 Set 2 in traditional characters

Ex. 3

*3.4 Fourth set*

3.4.1 Phrases

3.4.2 Set 3 in traditional characters

Ex. 4

*3.5 Creating new characters*

3.5.1 Representing sounds – onomatopoeia

3.5.2 Atomic elements

*3.6 Miscellany*

3.6.1 Set 4 in traditional characters

3.6.2 Distinguishing characters

3.6.3 Provide missing characters

*3.7 On the street #3*

(roads and airlines)

**Unit 4 (49 pp)**

*4.1 Tone contrasts*

*4.2 Existence and location*

4.2.1 Places

4.2.2 Locations

4.2.3 Existence versus location

4.2.4 Comfort stations

4.2.5 Born, grow up and live

*4.3 Time Phrases*

4.3.1 Topic--comment

4.3.2 Clock time

Ex. 1

4.3.3 Time of events

4.3.4 Business hours

4.3.5 Time zones

Ex. 2

*4.4 DE revisited*

4.4.1 Where the noun head is omitted

4.4.2 Where de does not appear

Ex. 3

*4.5 Names in detail*

4.5.1 The form of names

4.5.2 Xing

4.5.3 Other names



4.5.4 Míngzì

4.5.5 Usage

4.6 *Years*

4.6.1 Dates

4.6.2 Historical notes on dating

4.6.3 Age

4.6.4 The animal signs

4.6.5 Year in school or college

4.7 *Studying and working*

4.7.1 Vocabulary

4.7.2 Major; specialization

4.7.3 To study

4.7.4 Zài+V ‘action in progress’

4.7.5 Studying; being in school

4.7.6 Work

4.7.7 College and department

Ex. 4

4.8 *Forms of address*

4.8.1 Forms of address, instead of names

4.8.2 The changing scene

4.8.3 General titles

4.8.4 Other terms

4.8.5 Professional titles

4.8.6 From title to prefix

Ex. 5

4.9 *Introductions*

4.9.1 Relational information

4.9.2 A note on words for husband and wife

4.9.3 Responses

4.9.4 Dialogues

Ex. 6

4.10 *Dialogue: on the bus to Mianyang*

4.11 *Food (I)*

4.11.1 Short narratives

4.12 *Pinyin: initial w and y*

Ex. 7a,b,c

4.13 *Summary*

Ex. 8

4.14 Rhymes and rhythms

Xīnnián dào, xīnnián dào  
Èrlóu sānlóu, chǎngzhǎng shūjì

*Appendix 1: Courses of study and university names*

*Appendix 2: The 45 most common surnames*

**(Part II)**

**Chars 4 (21 pp); character sheets (6 pp)**

4.0 *Review*

- a) Fántǐzì reading
- b) Radicals and phonetics
- c) Fill-in-the-blanks to form words or phrases
- d) Labeling the map

4.1 *Set 1 with notes*

- 4.1.1 Compounds and phrases
- 4.1.2 Comment – response

Ex. 1

4.2 *Set 2 with notes*

- 4.2.1 Compounds and phrases
- 4.2.2 Comment – response

Ex. 2

4.3 *Set 3 with notes*

- 4.3.1 Compounds and phrases
- 4.3.2 Comment – response

Ex. 3

4.4 *Set 4 with notes*

- 4.4.1 Compounds and phrases
- 4.4.2 Comment – response

Ex. 4

4.5 *Traditional characters*

- 4.5.1 Comment – response

Ex. 5

4.6 *Míngpiàn with vocabulary*

4.7 *On the street #4*

- 1. Creative characters (Toys-Я-us)
- 2. Names of some Mainland newspapers

## Background

### 1. China

#### *Names for China*

It used to be thought that the name ‘China’ derived from the name of China’s early Qin dynasty (Chin or Ch’in in older transcriptions), whose rulers conquered all rivals and initiated the dynasty in 221 BCE. But, as Wilkinson notes (*Chinese History: A Manual*: 753, and fn 7), the original pronunciation of the name Qin was rather different, and would make it an unlikely source for the name China. Instead, China is thought to derive from a Persian root, first used for porcelain and only later applied to the country from which the finest examples of that material came. Another name, Cathay, now rather poetic in English but surviving as the regular name for the country in languages such as Russian (Kitai), is said to derive from the name of the Khitan Tartars, who formed the Liǎo dynasty in the north of China in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The Khitan dynasty was the first to make a capital in the region of modern Beijing.

The Chinese now call their country Zhōngguó, often translated as ‘Middle Kingdom’. Originally, this name meant the central, or royal, state of the many that occupied the region prior to the Qin unification. Other names were used before Zhōngguó became current. One of the earliest was Huá (or Huáxià, combining Huá with the name of the earliest dynasty, the Xià). Huá, combined with the Zhōng of Zhōngguó, appears in the modern official names of the country (see below).

#### *Chinese places*

##### *a) The People’s Republic of China (PRC) [Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó]*

This is the political entity proclaimed by Máo Zédōng when he gave the inaugural speech (‘China has risen again’) at the Gate of Heavenly Peace [Tiān’ānmén] in Beijing on October 1, 1949. The PRC claims sovereignty over Taiwan and the regions currently controlled by the government in Taipei.

##### *b) Mainland China; the Mainland [Zhōngguó Dàlù]*

This is a geographic term, used to refer to the continental part of China, without Taiwan, but also implying the land in actual control of the PRC. When the term functions as a proper name, referring to the *de facto* PRC, then we go against custom and write ‘the Mainland’, with a capital M; otherwise, it is written with the usual small ‘m’.

##### *c) The Republic of China (ROC) [Zhōnghuá Mínguó]*

This was the name of the political entity established in 1912, after the fall of the Manchu (or Qing) dynasty, which took place the previous year. The man most responsible for the founding of the Republic was Sun Yat-sen (Sūn Yìxiān in Mandarin), and for this, he has earned the name Guófù ‘Father of the Country’. But although he was named provisional president in 1911, fears for the unity of the country led to the appointment of Yuán Shíkǎi (Yuan Shih-k’ai), an important military and diplomatic official under the Qing, as the first president of the Republic in 1912. When the later president, Chiang Kai-shek (Mandarin: Jiǎng Jièshí), fled with his government to Taiwan in 1949, he kept the name

Republic of China as the basis of legitimacy over the whole of China, both Taiwan and the mainland.

*d) Taiwan [Táiwān]*

Taiwan is some 130 miles off the coast of Fujian; its central mountains are just visible from the Fujian coast on a clear day. Taiwan was named Formosa by the Dutch, who took over the Portuguese name of *Ilha Formosa* ‘beautiful island’. The Dutch colonized the island in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, fighting off the Spanish who had also established bases on the northern part of the island. Taiwan’s earliest inhabitants spoke Austronesian languages unrelated to Chinese, and indigenous groups such as the Ami, Paiwan and Bunan who still speak non-Chinese languages are descendents of those early Taiwan Austronesians. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, if not earlier, Chinese speaking Hakka and Fukienese – regional Chinese languages – had established small communities on the island. These were joined by holdouts from the Ming after the fall of that dynasty on the mainland. The Qing dynasty, that followed the Ming, annexed Taiwan in 1683, making it a province. In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan as part of a war settlement, and remained a colony until 1945. Then, in the period before the Communist victory in 1949, large numbers of mainlanders fled to Taiwan along with, or in conjunction with, the removal of the Nationalist government.

*e) Hong Kong [Xiāng Gǎng]*

From July 1997, Hong Kong has been a Special Administrative Region [tèbié xíngzhèngqū] of China, which guarantees it autonomy within the PRC in all but foreign affairs and defense. Its English name reflects the Cantonese pronunciation of what is in Mandarin Xiāng Gǎng ‘fragrant harbor’. Hong Kong was formally ceded to the British in the Treaty of Nanking [Nánjīng], signed in 1842 (on a ship anchored in the Yangtze River, slightly east of Nanjing) at the end of the Opium War. The Kowloon Peninsula [Jiǔlóng ‘nine dragons’] was added in 1860, and the New Territories [Xīnjiè] were leased for 99 years from 1898, making Hong Kong, in all, a little more than 1000 square kilometers.

Hong Kong has been settled by a number of distinct Chinese groups, including the so-called *Bendi* (‘locals’), who emigrated in the Sung (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> C.) after being driven from their homes in north China; the *Tanka*, fisherfolk who live on boats and are thought by some to be the descendents of the non-Han *Yue* people; the *Hokla*, early immigrants from Fujian; the *Hakka*, who ended up mostly in less fertile parts of the New Territories; and numerous clans and people from nearby Cantonese speaking regions, as well as other parts of China. Despite its small size, Hong Kong has preserved the traces of many traditional Chinese social forms and practices better than many other parts of the Chinese speaking world.

*f) Greater China*

The occasional need to talk about a single Chinese entity, consisting of the Mainland with Hong Kong, and Taiwan, has recently given rise to a term, Liǎng’àn Sāndì ‘two-shores three-lands’.



### Liǎng'àn Sāndì

(From *The World Factbook*, 2005; <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html>)

#### g) Nationalists and Communists

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, it was customary to distinguish the two political entities by their only extant political parties, the Communist Party (Gòngchǎndǎng), abbreviated CCP, and the Nationalist Party (Guómíndǎng, or Kuomintang), the KMT. Hence 'the Communist government', 'the Nationalist leaders', etc. Recent changes in Taiwan and the Mainland make neither term appropriate. In Taiwan, in the election of 1998, the first democratic election in a Chinese country, the Nationalists failed to win and became the main opposition party. Meanwhile, on the Mainland, the Communist Party, though retaining its institutional position in the government, has become less of a dominating force in political life.

#### h) Běijīng and Běipíng (and Peking)

One of the curious consequences of the political differences between the PRC and the ROC (Taiwan) is that they have different names for the city formerly known to the English speaking world as Peking. For the PRC, the capital is Běijīng ['the northern capital'], the city that has been the capital for all but brief periods since 1422 when Emperor Yǒng Lè of the Míng dynasty moved the government north from Nánjīng ['the southern capital'] in Central China. However, in 1927, the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek, having little real power in the north and under threat from the Japanese, made Nánjīng their capital, and restored the name Běipíng (Peiping) 'northern-peace' that the northern city had had before Yǒnglè made it his capital in the 15th century. Officially, the Nationalists retained the name Běipíng even after the Japanese conquered the city of Nánjīng, and continued to do after Běijīng reverted to the capital in 1949 under the PRC.

The spelling ‘Peking’, with a ‘ki’ may be a vestige of the French system of transcription that used ‘ki’ to represent the sound ‘tʃ’ – now written with a ‘j’. Or it may reflect the Cantonese pronunciation of the name Beijing, in which the initial of the second syllable is pronounced with a hard ‘k’ sound. Representations of Cantonese pronunciation were often adopted by the British as official postal spellings (cf. Nanking [Nánjīng] and Chungking [Chóngqīng]). Though most foreigners now spell the name of the city in *pinyin* transcription, Beijing (which represents the Mandarin pronunciation), the old spelling survives to this day in certain proper names, such as Peking University (still the official English name of the institution) and Peking duck. The transcription, Beijing, is not without its problems either, since speakers who do not know the *pinyin* system tend to make the ‘j’ sound more foreign or exotic by giving it a French quality: ‘bay-zhing’. As you will soon learn, the actual Mandarin pronunciation is closer to ‘bay-dzing’.

## 2. Chinese speech

### *Chinese*

Chinese, as a term for language, is used to refer to the native languages, spoken or written, now or in the past, of the Chinese people. Thus Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Classical Chinese are all Chinese. In other words, while Chinese can be used in a narrow sense to refer to what is sometimes called Modern Standard Chinese, colloquially called Mandarin by most English speakers, it is also used to refer to the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. In that respect it is comparable to the term ‘Romance’, that applies to the modern derivatives of Latin, such as French, Catalan, Romanian, and Spanish, as well as to Latin itself.

### *Mandarin [Guóyǔ, Pǔtōnghuà, Huáyǔ]*

Mandarin is a term that derives from a Portuguese word meaning ‘counselor’ – or ‘a mandarin’. As a name for the language, it dates from early Portuguese contacts with China, when it was used to translate the Chinese term Guānhuà, literally ‘speech of officials’. Guānhuà was the name given to specialized speaking practices which, though they might vary from one historical period to another, served as a *lingua franca* among officials and other educated classes who might come from different parts of China and speak mutually unintelligible Chinese in their home regions. A late form of Guānhuà, based on Beijing speech, can be regarded as the precursor to modern Mandarin. However, while Mandarin has survived as the English name for the modern language, the Chinese make use of a variety of terms.

Taiwan and most overseas communities call Mandarin Guóyǔ (‘national language’), a term dating at least from 1918. The PRC calls it Pǔtōnghuà (‘common language’), another term with a legacy dating back to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Singapore, where the different linguistic situation makes both terms inappropriate, it is called Huáyǔ (‘the language of the Huá’, Huá being an ancient name for the Chinese people). All three terms refer to a language that continues to be promoted as a national standard by the governments of both the PRC and Taiwan, and is generally conceived of as a norm for educated or formal speech by Chinese speaking peoples the world over.

***The origins of Mandarin***

In traditional China, the majority of the population spoke regional or local languages and were illiterate. For them, there was no general medium of communication across regional lines. For the educated, however, Guānhuà served in a limited way as a spoken medium; and Classical Chinese, the language of administration, education and high culture (see below), served as a written medium. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was clear that the lack of a spoken norm that could serve the communication needs of all classes across the country was a major obstacle to the modernization of China, and eventually efforts were made to identify a suitable medium and promote it as the standard. Guānhuà was an obvious candidate, but by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it had become strongly associated with the educated speech of Beijing, putting southerners at a disadvantage. And Classical Chinese, though it had no regional bias, was a highly stylized written language with ancient roots that made it unsuitable as the basis for a national spoken medium.

After various interesting attempts to establish a hybrid language to balance regional differences, particularly between north and south, the Chinese language planners settled on the northern strategy, promoting the speech that had also been the basis of Guānhuà: the *educated speech* of north China and particularly that of the capital Beijing. However, though Mandarin is based on educated northern usage and in particular, a refined Beijing pronunciation, it has also incorporated material from a broad range of other sources. Words with wide distribution have been adopted over northern or Beijing localisms, for example; and grammatical constructions characteristic of southern languages, such as Cantonese, Shanghaiese, often co-exist with northern patterns in the modern language. Spoken Mandarin also absorbed material from written sources that introduced words and phrasing from the important economic and cultural region of the Lower Yangtze Valley (Shànghǎi to Nánjīng), and words for modern concepts first coined in Japanese.

***Varieties of Mandarin***

Though both Taiwan and the PRC have always agreed on the relationship between Mandarin pronunciation and educated Beijing speech, political separation and cultural divergence have resulted in the emergence of two norms, as comparison of dictionaries from Taiwan and the PRC will show. These differences, though still moderate in scope, extend from pronunciation to lexicon and usage.

Even more variety is to be found at local levels. The case of Taiwan is illustrative. There, Mandarin is not the first language of much of the population. The most common first language is Táiyǔ ('Taiwanese'), a Southern Min language that is very similar to the Southern Min spoken in the province of Fujian across the Taiwan Straits. (Southern Min is also the predominant spoken language of the Singapore Chinese, and many other Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.) With so many in Taiwan speaking Táiyǔ as a first language, it is not surprising that Mandarin there is often influenced by the pronunciation, grammar and usage of that language. The result is Taiwan Mandarin. The same phenomenon occurs elsewhere, of course, so that no matter where you are in China, Mandarin heard on the street will generally have local features. Native speakers quickly get used to these differences, just as English speakers get used to the regional accents of

English. But learners will find the variation disruptive, and will need time and experience to adjust to it.

Though there are probably more and more Chinese whose first language is Mandarin and whose speech is close to the appointed norms, it is still true that the majority of Chinese speak more than one variety of Chinese, and for many of them Mandarin would be a second language. A few years ago, *USA Today* published statistics on the ‘world’s most common languages, ranked by population that uses each as a first language’. Mandarin was listed first, with 885 million speakers (followed by Spanish with 332 million and English with 322million). The figure for Mandarin would not include those whose first language is Cantonese or one of the other regional languages. But it must include a large number of speakers whose Mandarin would be barely understandable to someone familiar only with the standard.

When describing the best Mandarin (or the best Chinese), Chinese tend to focus on pronunciation, praising it as biāozhǔn ‘standard’ (as in ‘your Chinese is very biāozhǔn’). For this reason, native Chinese speakers, who tend to be effusive in their praise in any case, will sometimes flatter a foreigner by saying s/he speaks the language better than they do. By better, they mean with a better approximation to the standard, educated accent. Apart from language classrooms, the most biāozhǔn Mandarin is heard on the broadcast media, in schools, and in the speech of young, educated urban Chinese.

### ***Regional languages and minority languages***

There are some seven major dialect groupings of Chinese, including the geographically extensive Northern group (divided into Southwestern, Northwestern and Northern regions) from which Mandarin was promoted. Of the others, Cantonese (Yuè), Shanghainese (Wú), Fukienese or Hokkien (Mǐn) and Kèjiā or Hakka are the best known. (Yuè, Wú and Mǐn are Chinese linguistic designations, while Hokkien and Hakka are dialectal pronunciations of the Mandarin names Fújiàn and Kèjiā, respectively.) All represent groupings of diverse dialects thought to share a common origin. Even within the group, the varieties are not necessarily mutually intelligible. Cantonese for example, includes many dialects, such as Táishān (Hoisan), which are quite distinct from the standard Canton dialect.

In many respects the dialect groupings of Chinese – represented by Cantonese, Shanghainese, Hakka etc. – are different languages. They are not, after all, mutually intelligible and they have their own standard speeches (Canton for Cantonese, Suzhou for Shanghainese, etc.) In linguistic terms, they are often said to be comparable to Dutch and German, or Spanish and Portuguese. However, as noted earlier, unlike those European languages, the Chinese regional languages share a written language, make reference to a common standard (Mandarin), and identify with a common culture. Recently, the term ‘topolect’, a direct translation with Greek roots of the Chinese term fāngyán ‘place-language’, has gained currency as a more formal term for what are generally called ‘regional languages’ in this text. So we may speak of Cantonese as the standard language within the Cantonese (or Yuè) grouping, and varieties such as Hoisan as dialects within Cantonese.



Regional languages should be distinguished from the languages of the non-Chinese (non-Han) ethnic groups, such as the Mongolians, Tibetans, or Uighurs, that make up about 8 to 9% of the total population of China. There are 56 officially recognized ethnic minorities in China, almost all of them with their own languages or language groups.



**Representatives from China's minorities gather around the Chairman. A painting in the Minorities Research Institute in Beijing. [JKW 1982]**

### 3. Chinese writing

#### *Written Mandarin*

As noted above, Mandarin is often used to refer to the written language of China as well as to the standard spoken language. This is the language of composition learned in school and used by all educated Chinese regardless of the particular variety or regional languages that they speak. A Cantonese, for example, speaking Taishan Cantonese (Hoisan) at home and in the neighborhood, speaking something closer to standard Cantonese when s/he goes to Canton (city), and speaking Cantonese flavored Mandarin in certain formal or official situations, is taught to write a language that is different in terms of vocabulary, grammar and usage from both Hoisan and standard Cantonese. Even though s/he would read it aloud with Cantonese pronunciation, it would in fact be more easily relatable to spoken Mandarin in lexicon, grammar, and in all respects *other than pronunciation*.

#### *From Classical Chinese to modern written Chinese*

Written language always differs from spoken, for it serves quite different functions. But in the case of Chinese, the difference was, until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

extreme. For until then, most written communication, and almost all printed matter, was written in a language called Wényán in Chinese ('literary language'), and generally known in English as Classical Chinese. As noted earlier, it was this language that served as a medium of written communication *for the literate classes*

Classical Chinese was unlikely ever to have been a close representation of a spoken language. It is thought to have had its roots in the language spoken some 2500 years ago in northern China. That language, though still Chinese in the sense that it is ancestral to modern Chinese languages, would have differed quite significantly in sounds, grammar and vocabulary from any form of modern Chinese.

Though Classical Chinese can be regarded as a different language from the modern, it was written in characters that have retained their basic shape to the present day, and these serve to preserve the connection between ancient and modern words whose pronunciation and grammatical context is radically different. While for English, spelling changes (that reflect changes in pronunciation), as well as a high degree of word replacement, make Old English texts almost completely opaque to modern readers, ancient Chinese texts continue to look familiar to Chinese readers despite the changes that have taken place in the intervening years. Educated Chinese can read them aloud in modern pronunciation, Mandarin, say, or Cantonese. Without knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of Classical Chinese, they may not fully understand them, but enough words – and more than words, sayings and phrases – have survived to modern times to make the writings of Confucius (5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE), or the poems of Li Po (8<sup>th</sup> century AD) superficially accessible to the modern reader of Chinese.

Classical Chinese is still used for certain kinds of formal or ritual writing, eg diplomas and inscriptions, much like Latin in western countries. It has also been a source of words, quotations, allusions, stories and even style that appear in the modern written language, as well as in speech, but relatively few people read the classical language well, and only a few specialists are still able to write it fluently.

Since Classical Chinese was not based on an accessible spoken language, facility in writing it required memorizing large samples to act as models. Once learned, the classical language would tend to channel expression in conservative directions. Citation was the main form of argument; balance and euphony were crucial elements of style. These features did not endear it to the modernizers, and they sought to replace it with a language closer to the modern spoken (as noted in §2). They had a precedent, for all through Chinese history, there had in fact been genres of writing known as Báihuà ('white = plain or vernacular language') that were rich in colloquial elements. Such genres were not highly regarded or considered worthy as literary models, but they were well known as the medium of the popular novels of the Ming and Qing, such as *Dream of the Red Chamber* (also called the *The Story of Stone*), *Monkey* (also known as *Journey to the West*), or the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Báihuà, though it retained classical elements, provided the early model for a more colloquial standard written language.

Because norms within the newly emerging written language varied, and led to problems of consistency and clarity, some advocated a return to Classical Chinese as the written standard, and if it could have shed some of its stylistic affectations (such as the high value put on parallelism of structure and elaborate or archaic diction), Classical Chinese might have developed into a modern written norm much as Classical Arabic has become the written norm of the Arabic speaking world. But Classical Chinese was too closely associated with conservatism and insularity at a time when China was looking to modernize. Nevertheless, a new written norm does not arise overnight, and for at least the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a number of different styles across the range of classical to colloquial coexisted and vied for dominance. Following the Chinese revolution, written styles in Taiwan and the PRC diverged. In the PRC, political and other factors favored a more colloquial written style, whereas in Taiwan the influence of classical styles has remained stronger.

### ***Characters***

The earliest extensive examples of written Chinese date from late in the second millennium BCE. These are the so-called oracle bone inscriptions (jiǎgǔwén), inscribed or painted on ox bones and the bottom plate, the carapace, of tortoise shells. This early writing made use of characters whose form differs in appearance but which can be directly related to the modern characters (particularly the traditional characters that are still standard in Taiwan). In the Qin dynasty (221 – 206 BC), the script was modified and standardized as part of the reform of government administration. The resulting style, known as the ‘little seal’ (xiǎo zhuàn) is still used on seals (or ‘chops’). At first glance, little seal characters look quite unlike the modern, but a native reader can often discern the basic parts and figure them out.

A script known as lìshū came into extensive use in the Han dynasty (202 BCE – 220 AD). Individual strokes in the lìshū style are described as having “silkworm’s head and swallow’s tail”. It is still used occasionally for writing large characters. The modern script, the kind generally used for printed matter, is based on the kǎishū ‘the model script’ that has been in use since before the period known as the Southern and Northern Dynasties (5th and 6th centuries). Other varieties of script were developed for handwriting (xíngshū ‘running script’) and calligraphy (cǎoshū ‘grass script’).

### ***Traditional and simplified characters***

In the past, simpler and more complex versions of characters have often co-existed. In many cases, the more complicated were used for formal correspondence and the simpler, for personal. In the 1950s however, as part of a program to promote literacy in the PRC, a set of simpler characters, most of them based on attested forms, were promoted as a general standard for all printed matter. Singapore adopted the new forms for most purposes, but Taiwan, Hong Kong and most overseas communities kept the traditional forms, and as a result, two types of (formal) characters are now in use in the Chinese speaking world. In Chinese, these are called fántǐzì ‘abundant-stroke-characters’ and jiǎntǐzì ‘simple-stroke-characters’, or in English, ‘traditional’ and ‘simplified’. The two types are illustrated below, using the phrase Zhōngguó huà ‘Chinese [spoken] language (middle-country speech)’:

**Traditional****Simplified**

中國話

Zhōngguó huà

中国话

Zhōngguó huà

The three characters cited illustrate the differences nicely. Many characters have only one form (like zhōng), or show slight differences between the two forms (like huà). Others (like guó) show significant differences but are easily relatable. Relatively few, no more than a few dozen, are completely different, and most of those are commonly encountered. So the differences between the two sets of characters are not as significant as might be imagined. A native speaker sees the relationship between the two fairly easily, and using context, moves from one to the other without much difficulty. Students generally write only one style, but they should be comfortable reading either.

***Homophony***

Characters represent syllable-length words (or rather, morphemes, the components of compounds). Since in Chinese these units are short, the chance of homophony is relatively high, more so than in English. In English words pronounced the same are often written the same, eg the ‘pens’ of ‘pig pen’ and ‘ink pen.’ But it is also common in English for different words of identical pronunciation to be written differently: ‘to, too, two’. Written Chinese is more comparable to the latter case: words with different (and unrelatable) meanings are written with different characters. A syllable such as shì can be written dozens of ways, depending on the meaning, as the famous Chinese linguist Chao Yuen Ren showed in a tour de force whose title was:

施氏食獅史

Shī shì shí shī shǐ.

(Shi) clan eat lion story

The tale of how Shī of the Shì clan ate the lion.

Chao’s tale continues for another 100 or so characters, all pronounced shì on one of the four tones. It is written in the very concise prose of Classical Chinese (and given modern sound values when read). Written in modern Chinese, there would be far less homophony; many of the single syllable words would, in fact, be compounds. So the story could probably be read aloud and understood. But Chao’s exercise makes the point nicely: characters are units of sound and meaning. Letters are units of sound only.

***Transcribing sound in characters***

Characters are sometimes used only for their sound values, with the usual meanings ignored. In this way, Chinese characters can be used to transcribe foreign sounds. So just as we can use Roman letters to write Chinese in *pinyin*, Chinese have used characters to write foreign languages, including English. Here is an example from a very simple Chinese English-teaching manual from the Mainland (and therefore written in simplified characters):

艾姆搜普利丝得吐斯衣油厄根  
 ài-mǔ sōu pǔ-lì-sī-dé tǔ sī-yī yóu è-gēn  
 I'm so pleased to see you again.

Characters are regularly used for their syllabic value, in this way, to transliterate personal names, names of places, as well as sounds: 沙士比亚 Shāshībīyà ‘Shakespeare’; 密西西比 Mìxīxībǐ ‘Mississippi’; 哗啦 huālā ‘splat’ [*sound of crashing*]. But because characters can only be used for syllabic units, the match is not usually as good as it would be in an alphabetic system, that can match a symbol to each consonant and vowel sound. A more precise match could be achieved by inserting an alphabetic transcription such as *bopomofo* or *pinyin* (see below) into a character text, but this practice is still rare.

### ***Pictographs, ideographs, logographs.***

Simple characters, or the basic components of more complicated ones, can often be traced back to pictorial representations, and for this reason characters are sometimes labeled pictographs. The earliest characters, the oracle bone inscriptions, look even more like pictures. But the majority of modern characters do not derive directly from attempts to represent objects pictorially, and even those that do, have become so conventionalized that it is only in rare cases that one can guess the meaning from the form alone. That is not to say that Chinese characters do not have certain aesthetic qualities that can be exploited in poetry and art, or that their pictorial qualities cannot be exploited for language learning as well; it is rather that the pictorial aspects of characters do not necessarily play a significant role in ordinary reading or writing.

The term ideograph has also been applied to Chinese characters, sometimes with the implication that characters allow immediate access to meaning without reference to sound, or without reference to particular words. The fact that Chinese characters were borrowed into other languages such as Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese to represent words that matched in meaning but not sound offer some support for such a notion. Indeed, it is true that the link between character and sound can vary. Cantonese speakers read Chinese with Cantonese sounds, while Mandarin speakers read them with Mandarin (much as Australians or Scots read English texts in their own pronunciation). But regardless of the particular language, understanding of the text is still dependent on linguistic contexts. Even in classical Chinese, the reader has to identify words and contexts that are linguistic, not just in the realm of thought, in order to perceive meaning. So, like pictographic, the term ideographic is not a very suitable characterization either.

Writing systems are better named according to the units that they encode. Thus English is basically phonographic, with letters encoding sounds; but it also has considerable logographic elements (to, too, two; &; \$). Chinese writing is primarily logographic (units encode words) but also has syllabo-graphic elements that connect syllables that are similar in sound.



**Taipei: Selling New Year scrolls.** [JKW 1970]

### ***Representing the sounds of Chinese***

While characters do exhibit sound-based connections, the pronunciation of a particular character is not systematically indicated by its form. This can be an advantage, as we noted earlier, for it allows speakers of different regional languages, or even different languages in the case of Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese, to apply quite different sounds to the same graph. But for learners, it creates obvious difficulties. Learners need to be able to symbolize the pronunciation accurately for purposes of keeping track of material and internalizing correct pronunciation. (When Cantonese and speakers of other regional languages learn Mandarin, they need a transcription system for the same reasons.) Of even more importance, an alphabetic system of writing, which can be learned very quickly, speeds up the presentation of spoken language material.

Alphabetic systems for writing Chinese date back at least to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Most have made use of Roman letters, and are therefore called Romanizations. We can illustrate some of the systems, using the compound word for ‘Chinese language’ again:

1. <i>Wade-Giles</i>	Chūngkuó huà	ㄓ = zh
		ㄨ = w
2. <i>Yale</i>	Jūnggwó hwà	ㄥ = eng
3. <i>National Romanization</i>	Jong-guo huah	ㄍ = g
		ㄨ = w
4. <i>Zhùyīn Fúhào</i>	→ →	ㄜ ㄛ = ó
5. <i>Hànyǔ Pīnyīn</i>	Zhōngguó huà	ㄏ = h
		ㄨ = w
		ㄚ = à

The Wade-Giles system (named for Thomas Wade, a Professor of Chinese at Cambridge University at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> century who invented it, and Herbert A. Giles, a consular officer and later, Wade's successor at Cambridge who incorporated it in his dictionary) was for many years used in most English language publications on China, as well as in library catalogues. It is well known for distinguishing the plain initial consonants from the aspirated (g from k, d from t, zh from ch etc. in the *pinyin* system) by placing an apostrophe after the latter: *kuo* versus *k'uo*, for example, or *chung* versus *ch'ung*. (This is phonetically quite sensible since both sounds are voiceless in Chinese.)

The Yale system grew out of work performed by the War Department during World War II and was used in the Yale textbook series, familiar to several generations of students of Chinese. It is probably the most transparent [for English speakers] of the Romanized transcription systems. National Romanization (Guóyǔ Luómǎzì), a system that had official status in China during the 1930s, incorporates the tone in the spelling – notice there are no tone marks above the vowels – which makes it invaluable for learning and retaining tones. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn is the official system of the PRC and has been accepted by most of the rest of the world, including, recently, Taiwan.

Zhùyīn Fúhào ('transcription of sounds'), the system shown on the right of the others above, is called *Bopo mofo*, colloquially, after the first four letters of its alphabet. It has a longer history than *pinyin*, being based on a system created in 1919, called Zhùyīn Zīmǔ 'transcription alphabet' that was intended to serve as a fully fledged writing system. It was inspired by the Japanese 'kana' system, whose symbols derive from characters rather than Roman letters. *Bopo mofo* symbols have the advantage of looking Chinese and of not suggesting any particular English (or other language's) sound values. In Taiwan, children, as well as many foreign students, learn to read with materials in which *Bopo mofo* is written vertically alongside the character text to indicate pronunciation.

### ***Hànyǔ Pīnyīn***

Pinyin ('spelling the sound') was developed and officially adopted by the PRC in the 1950s, and it is now used in textbooks, dictionaries and other reference books, computer

input systems, and on road and shop signs there. In recent years, some schools in China have been encouraging children at certain stages in their education to write essays in pinyin to improve composition and style, and it is not unlikely that its functions will continue to expand in the future.

It is sometimes claimed that pinyin (or any other such system of transcribing the sounds of Mandarin) cannot serve as a fully-fledged writing system because the degree of homophony in Chinese is such that some reference to characters is necessary for disambiguation. This is certainly true in the case of the *shi*-story cited earlier, and it might be true for Classical Chinese in general (if it is read out in modern pronunciation, as it usually is). But it is certainly not true for texts written in colloquial styles. *Anything that can be understood in speech can be written and understood in pinyin*. Many people email successfully in pinyin without even indicating the tones! The question is, using pinyin, how far one can stray from colloquial speech and still be understood. Written styles range from the relatively colloquial to the relatively classical, but if the latter can be understood when read aloud, then presumably they can be understood written in pinyin.

**Bǎihuā qífàng, bǎijiā zhèngmíng!**

100-flowers together-blossom, 100-schools [of thought] contend  
Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend!

百花齊放，百家爭鳴

#### 4. Key Terms

Peoples Republic of China (PRC)	Běijīng (Peking)
The Mainland	Běipíng (Peiping)
The Republic of China (ROC)	Máo Zédōng
Taiwan	Chiang Kai-shek (Jiǎng Jièshí)
Hong Kong (Xiāng Gǎng)	Sun Yat-sen (Sūn Yìxiān)
Qīng (Manchu) dynasty (1644-1912)	1842
Míng (Chinese) dynasty (1368-1644)	1911
Yuán (Mongol) dynasty (1279-1368)	1949
Chinese	oracle bone inscriptions (jiǎgǔwén))
Guānhuà (officials' language)	little seal characters (xiǎo zhuàn)
Mandarin	model script (kǎishū)
Guóyǔ (national language)	traditional characters (fántǐzì)
Pǔtōnghuà (ordinary language)	simplified characters (jiǎntǐzì)
lingua franca	homophony
Classical Chinese (Wényán)	pictographs
Báihuà	ideographs
Táiyǔ	logographs
Taiwanese Mandarin	Wade-Giles
Hànyǔ Pīnyīn	Zhùyīn Fúhào (Bopo mofo)
dialects	
Regional languages: Cantonese; Shanghainese; Fujianese (Hokkien); Kejia (Hakka), etc.	



## 5. Further reading and references

Chen, Ping. *Modern Chinese*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

DeFrancis, John. *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984.

DeFrancis, John, ed. *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.

Erbaugh, Mary S. *Difficult Characters: Interdisciplinary Studies of Chinese and Japanese Writing* (Pathways to Advanced Skills, Publication series volume VI), National Resource Center, The Ohio State University, 2002.

Hannas, William C. *Asian's Orthographic Dilemma*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

Newnham, Richard. *About Chinese*, Penguin Books, 1971.

Norman, Jerry. *Chinese* (Cambridge Language Surveys), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Ramsey, Robert S. *The Languages of China*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Wilkinson, Endymion. *Chinese History: A Manual* (Harvard-Yenching Monograph Series, 52), Harvard University Asia Center. Revised and enlarged, 2000.



Beijing: In the Imperial Palace [JKW 1982]

## Sounds and symbols: An overview of pinyin

“The writer was required at school to read his lessons aloud sixty times; that was for reading books in his own language.”

*Chao Yuen Ren, talking about himself, in Mandarin Primer, Harvard University Press, 1961, fn. 1, p. 118.*

### Contents

1 The syllable	<i>Exercise 1</i>
2 Tones	<i>Exercise 2</i>
3 Initial consonants	<i>Exercise 3</i>
4 Rhymes	<i>Exercises 4, 5, 6</i>
5 Miscellany	
6 Writing connected text in pinyin	
7 Recapitulation	<i>Exercise 7</i>

To learn to converse in Chinese, it helps to develop two abilities: the ability to recognize and produce the sounds of the language adequately so you can hear and repeat Chinese material; and the ability to match the sounds of Chinese to phonetic notation so you can read, take notes or otherwise keep track of language material before you have internalized the formal character based writing system. However, it is monotonous – and probably inefficient – to try to learn the sounds and transcription before you learn how to say anything. So this introductory lesson serves a short-term and a long-term purpose. In the short-term, it provides the information you need to proceed to the first speech samples in Unit 1. And in the long-term, it provides detailed information about the sounds and their notation, which you will be able to refer to regularly as you progress through the book.



Station sign at a Beijing subway station, written in characters and pinyin  
(the latter showing word divisions but not tones). [JKW 2005]

## 1 The syllable

As noted in the introduction, Hànyǔ Pīnyīn (literally ‘Chinese-language joined-sounds’), called ‘pinyin’ for short, is the a notation for representing standard Mandarin pronunciation. It has official status not only in China but also in the international community, and is now generally used throughout the Chinese speaking world. Though based on familiar Roman letters (only *v* is not utilized), both consonantal letters (*c*, *x*, and *q*, for example) and vocalic (such as *i*, *u* and *o*) are sometimes matched to sounds in ways unfamiliar, or even counterintuitive to speakers used to modern English spelling conventions.

### 1.1 Sound versus symbol (letter)

From the start, it is important to make a distinction between sound and the representation of sound. In pinyin, for example, *jī* is pronounced *jee* (with 'level tone'), *qī* is *chee*. Neither is hard (for English speakers) to pronounce, but the way the latter is represented – with a ‘*q*’ (and no following ‘*u*’) – is counterintuitive, and difficult to remember at first. On the other hand, pinyin *r* represents a sound that, for many speakers of standard Mandarin, is a blend of the *r* of *run* with the *s* of *pleasure* (or the *j* of French *je*) – in other words, an ‘*r*’ with friction. This sound may be difficult for a non-Mandarin speaker to produce well, but associating it with the symbol ‘*r*’ is less problematical. So, as you learn pinyin, you will encounter problems of pronunciation on the one hand, and problems of transcription, on the other. It is important to keep the distinction clear.

### 1.2 The syllable

When introducing the sounds of standard Chinese, it is useful to begin with the syllable, a unit whose prominence is underscored by the one-character-per-syllable writing system. The *spoken* syllable in Chinese is often analyzed in terms of an initial consonant sound and a rhyme, the latter being everything other than the initial. Chinese school children, when focusing on pronunciation, often read out pinyin syllables (which are usually also meaningful units associated with characters) in an exaggerated initial-rhyme division: *tuh--ù* > *tù* (‘hare’), *luh--óng* > *lóng* (‘dragon’), etc.

The pinyin *written* syllable can also be usefully analyzed in terms of an initial and a rhyme. The rhyme, in turn, contains vowels (V), a tones (T) written above the vowels, medials (M) and endings (E). Of these, only the vowel is always present (as, for example, in the sentence-final particle that is simply an untuned *a*). Thus, all possible pinyin syllables can be represented by the following formula:

<i>Initial</i>		<i>Rhyme</i>		
			T	
C <sub>i</sub>		M	<u>V</u>	E
		i,u,ü		i,o/u,n,ng

<i>Vowel:</i>	a
<i>Vowel\Tone:</i>	ā, è
<i>Initial + Vowel\Tone:</i>	tā, bǐ, kè, shū
<i>Initial + Medial + Vowel\Tone:</i>	xiè, zuò, duì, xué, jiù, nüé
<i>Initial + Vowel\Tone + Ending:</i>	hěn, máng, hǎo, lèi, dōu
<i>Initial + Medial + Vowel\Tone + Ending:</i>	jiàn, jiǎng, jiāo

**Initials** are 21 in number, and are usually presented in a chart of representative syllables, arranged in rows and columns (shown in §3.1 below). Whether the initials are written with a single consonant letter (l, m, z) or several (sh, zh), they all represent only one sound unit (or phoneme). Chinese has no initial ‘clusters’ of the sort represented by ‘cl’ or ‘sn’ in English.

There are six possible [written] **vowels**: a, e, i, o, u and ü (the last representing a ‘rounded high front’ vowel, as in German *über* or the last vowel of French *déjà vu*). Vowels can be preceded by **medials** (i, u and ü), and followed by **endings**, two of which are written with vowel symbols (i, o), and two with consonantal (n, ng). There is actually a third vowel ending that can occur after the main vowel (in addition to i and o), and that is u; for with the main vowel o, the ending o is written u to avoid the misleading combination ‘oo’. Thus, to cite words from Unit 1, one finds hǎo, lǎo (both with -o), but instead of ‘dǎo’, you get dǎu, and instead of ‘zhǎo’, you get zhǎu (both with -u).

Notice that the inventory of consonantal endings in Mandarin is small – only n and ng. Regional Chinese languages, such as Cantonese, have more (-p, -t, -m, etc.) The well known name of the Chinese frying pan, the ‘wok’, is derived from a Cantonese word, with a final ‘k’ sound; its Mandarin counterpart, guō, lacks the final consonant. In historical terms, Mandarin has replaced final consonants, Cantonese has preserved them. Surnames often show the same kind of distinction between the presence and absence of a final consonant in Mandarin and Cantonese: Lu and Luk, Yip and Ye, for example.

**Tones** are a particularly interesting feature of the Mandarin sound system and will be discussed in more detail in §2 in this unit. For now, we note that stressed syllables may have one of four possible tones, indicated by the use of diacritical marks written over the main vowel (V). Unstressed syllables, however, do not have tonal contrasts; their pitch is, for the most part, conditioned by that of surrounding syllables.

Because medials, vowels and some endings are all written with vowel letters, pinyin rhymes may have strings of two or three vowel letters, eg: -iu, -ui, -iao, -uai. By convention, the tone mark is placed on the vowel proper, not on the medial or on the ending: lèi, jiāo, zuò. As a rule of thumb, look to see if the first of two vowel letters is a possible medial; if it is, then the next vowel letter is the core vowel, and that gets the tone mark; if not, then the first gets it: iè, ǎo, ué, ōu, iào.

**Exercise 1.**

Without trying to pronounce the syllables, place the tone marks provided over the correct letter of the pinyin representations:

xie [˥]   jiang [˨˩˦]   dui [˥˩]   hao [˥˩]   lian [˥˩]   gui [˥˩]   zhou [˨˩˦]   qiao [˥˩]

---

One sound that is not shown in the syllable formula given in §1.2 above is the final r-sound. It is represented, not surprisingly, by r in pinyin, and is obligatory in a few words with the e-vowel, such as èr ‘two’. However, in northern Mandarin, a common word-building suffix, appearing mostly in nouns, and favored by some speakers and some regions more than others, is also represented by a final ‘r’, eg diǎnr, huàr, bànr, huángr. The final r often blends with the rest of the syllable according to rather complicated rules that will be discussed in detail elsewhere.

## 2 Tones

Words in Mandarin are pronounced with a regular tonal contour, or pitch, much like the stress patterns that distinguish the English verb ‘reCORD’ from the noun ‘REcord’. In Mandarin, the word lǎoshī ‘teacher’, for example, is pronounced laoshi (‘low’ followed by ‘high’), which in English terms is like having to say teacher rather than teacher each time you say the word. The presence of tones in Chinese is often cited as another of those lurid features that makes the language unique and difficult to learn; but tones are, in fact, not unique to Chinese and probably no more difficult to learn than stress or intonation is for learners of English.

As noted earlier, there are four basic tones in Mandarin. Regional dialects of Mandarin, such as those spoken in the Tianjin area or in the far southwest (Kunming, for example) may realize the four tones with markedly different pitch contours from those found in standard Mandarin. Moreover, the regional languages have more than four tones. Cantonese, for example, is usually analyzed as having four tones on two levels, for a total of [at least] eight. Mandarin also differs from most of the regional languages in having a predilection for words with [non-initial] toneless syllables: shūshu ‘uncle’; xíngli ‘luggage. In some cases, toneless syllables are virtually swallowed up by the previous syllable; wǒmen ‘we’, for example, is often pronounced ‘wǒm’ in speech.

### 2.1 The 4 tones

It is difficult to learn to produce or even recognize tones from descriptions, though we will use the descriptive terms ‘high (and level), rising, low, falling’ as a way of referring to them. These terms are only suggestive of the actual shape of the tone, but they do underscore the symmetry of the system: a high and a low, a rising and a falling. In modern Mandarin, though the tones have formal names (that can only be rationalized by reference to earlier stages of the language), it is common practice to refer to them numerically by using the numbers 1-4 (yī, èr, sān, sì) and the word for sound, shēng [shuhng]: yīshēng, èrshēng, sānshēng, sìshēng. (Toneless syllables are called qīngshēng ‘light-toned’.) In English we can also refer to the tones as ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’ and

‘fourth’. As noted earlier, in pinyin, tones are indicated iconically by marks placed over the ‘main’ vowel letter.

### TONES

ā	high	1st	yīshēng
á	rising	2nd	èrshēng
ǎ	low	3rd	sānshēng
à	falling	4th	sìshēng
a	context dependent		qīngshēng

### 2.2 Tone concepts

To learn to produce tones, it is useful to conceive of them in particular ways. The first tone, for example, which has a high and level contour, can be thought of as **SUNG OUT**, because singing a syllable in English usually results in sustained level pitch rather like the high tone. The second tone, which rises from mid-low to high, can be associated with **DOUBT**: “Did you say Wáng?” “Máo?” The third tone is the subject of the next paragraph, but the fourth tone, which falls from a very high pitch to a low, can usefully be associated with **LIST FINAL** intonation, or – for many people – **CERTAINTY**: ‘I said Wèi’ or ‘It’s *late*!’; or ‘1,2,3 (all rising) and 4!’

### 2.3 The low-tone

You will notice that the pinyin symbol for the low-tone is v-shaped, suggesting a contour that falls, then rises. In isolation, it does indeed fall and rise: hǎo ‘be good’; wǒ ‘I; me’; jiǎng ‘speak; explain’. But in close conjunction with a following syllable (other than one with the same low-tone – as shown below), it tends to have a low, non-rising pitch. If you can find a Chinese speaker to model the following phrases (from Unit 1), you can try listening for relatively low pitch in the low-toned syllable, hěn [huhn] ‘very; quite’, that appear at the beginning of the following phrases:

hěn gāo	‘tall’
hěn máng	‘busy’
hěn lèi	‘tired’

For *most* speakers, a low-toned syllable in *second* position of a phrase will also stay low, without much of a rise. Again, if you can find a speaker to model the following phrases, see if you agree that the second syllable is primarily low:

shūfǎ	‘calligraphy’
tuántǐ	‘group’
kànfǎ	‘point of view’

For learners, regarding the third tone as ‘low’, then learning that it rises in certain contexts, seems to produce better results than thinking of it as falling-rising and canceling the final rise in certain contexts. *So the third tone, we will refer to as ‘low’, and to produce it, you aim low and add the final rise only when the syllable is isolated.*

#### 2.4 The tone chart

The chart below takes 12 of the most common surnames to illustrate the four tones. (In Chinese, the surname is the first component of the full name, not the last: eg Lǐ in Lǐ Liánjié (Jet Li’s Chinese name). In the chart, the four tones are characterized in terms of their pitch contours (high and level, rising, etc.) as well as by the four heuristic concepts (sung out, doubt, etc.) that help us to produce them correctly.

<i>tone:</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>egs.</i>	Zhōu Zhāng Gāo	Wáng Máo Chén	Lǐ Kǒng Mǎ	Wèi Dù Zhào
<i>description:</i>	high, level	rising	low (with rise)	falling
<i>concept:</i>	sung out	doubt (?)	low	finality (!)

#### Exercise 2.

The following short sentences consist of a pronoun tā ‘he; she’, the verb xìng (think *syìng*), meaning ‘be surnamed’, and one of the 12 surnames presented above. Keeping your tone concepts in mind, and ideally, with feedback from a Chinese speaker, focus on the different tones of the surnames while pronouncing the sentences.

Tā xìng Zhāng.	His/her surname’s Zhang.
Tā xìng Máo.	
Tā xìng Wèi.	
Tā xìng Wáng.	
Tā xìng Kǒng.	
Tā xìng Zhōu.	
Tā xìng Dù.	
Tā xìng Gāo.	
Tā xìng Mǎ.	
Tā xìng Chén.	
Tā xìng Zhào.	
Tā xìng Lǐ	

---

#### 2.5 On the history of Mandarin tones

Tone systems as complex, or more complex than that of Mandarin are a feature of dozens of languages spoken in southwest China and adjoining regions of mainland Southeast Asia, including the national languages of Burma, Thailand and Vietnam. While tone may

be a more or less permanent feature of the region, within particular languages, tone systems may appear, evolve, or disappear.

The tonal system of Chinese is also known to have evolved over the centuries. Evidence from ancient rhyme tables and other sources indicates that at an earlier stage, prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the ancestor of modern Mandarin also had four tones. They were named píng ‘level’, shǎng ‘rising’, qù ‘going’ and rù ‘entering’ (which are the modern pronunciations of the names given to them then). The last was found only on checked syllables, those ending with stopped consonants such as -k, -t and -p, which as noted earlier, are no longer found in Mandarin.

The earlier names of the tones are suggestive, but we cannot know precisely what the four sounded like. We do know, however, that they were distributed differently from those of modern Mandarin. In fact, the modern names for the four tones of Mandarin reflect their evolution. The modern tones are called, formally, yīnpíng, yángpíng, shǎng and qù (tones 1 through 4, respectively). The rù-tone has disappeared (along with the consonantal endings), and the words that once had that tone now appear with other tones. As the names suggest, old píng toned words are now divided between yīnpíng (the level) and yángpíng (the rising). It is known that the tonal distinction between level and rising, seen on words such as tīng ‘listen’ versus tíng ‘stop’, emerged from a contrast that was formerly found in the initial consonants. Similar splits in all the original four tones are at the basis of the eight tone systems of regional languages such as Cantonese.

Some linguists have adduced evidence for pre-tonal stages of Chinese, or at least stages when pitch differences were not so prominent. A more detailed discussion of tone in Chinese can be found in books listed at the end of introduction.

### 3 Initial consonants

Many pinyin letters are pronounced ‘like English’: the ‘el’ of lǎo, for example, is very like English ‘l’, and pinyin f, s, n and m all have more or less the same values in Chinese and English scripts. Unfortunately, such cases are liable to make you think of English even where the pinyin letters have rather *different* values from those of English. Below is a table of symbols that represent all the possible initial consonants of Mandarin. Following Chinese custom, they are presented with a particular set of vowels, and ordered from front of the mouth (labials) to back (velars, and glottals).

#### 3.1 The consonant chart

Two notes: First of all, letters w and y, which do appear initially in pinyin (eg in the numbers wǔ ‘five’ and yī ‘one’), are treated as special cases of ‘u’ and ‘i’, respectively, in initial position; thus, instead of ‘ī’, one finds yī, instead of ‘ǔ’, wǔ, instead of ‘iě’, yě, instead of ‘uǒ’, wǒ, etc. Second, the vowels conventionally placed with the different classes of initials to make them pronounceable turn out to be some of those that have quite idiosyncratic values for speakers of English. Thus ‘o’ in the first line of the table below is not pronounced ‘oh’, but ‘waw’; ‘e’ in the second line is ‘uh’; ‘i’ in the third and fourth lines is swallowed up by the initial, but in the fifth line, it represents the more expected ‘ee’. The vowel sounds will be discussed in §4 below, but for now, you can use



the hints provided on the right hand side of the chart, and imitate your teacher or some other speaker of Chinese:

like			I	II	III	IV	V-sound
	1	lips	bo	po	mo	fo	(‘waw’)
	2	tongue tip at teeth ^	de	te	ne	le	(‘uh’)
dzz/tsz/sz	3	flat tongue at teeth <u>        </u>	<b>zi</b>	<b>ci</b>	<b>si</b>		(not ‘ee’)
jr/chr/shr	4	tongue tip raised <u>        </u> !	<b>zhi</b>	<b>chi</b>	<b>shi</b>	<b>ri</b>	(not ‘ee’)
‘yie[ld]’	5	spread lips <>	ji	qi	xi		(‘ee’)
	6	back of tongue high ~	ge	ke	he		(‘uh’)

### 3.2 Notes

#### Columns I and II

In English, the distinction between sounds such as ‘b’ and ‘p’ or ‘d’ and ‘t’ is usually said to be one of voicing (vocal chord vibration): with ‘b’ and ‘d’, voicing begins relatively earlier than with ‘p’ and ‘t’. However, in Chinese, the onset of voicing of the row I consonants is different from that of English. The that the sound of pinyin ‘b’ is actually between English ‘b’ and ‘p’, that of pinyin ‘d’, between English ‘d’ and ‘t’, etc. That is why the Wade-Giles system of Romanization (mentioned in the introduction) writes ‘p/p’ rather than ‘b’ and ‘p’ (T’aipei rather than Taibei); in phonetic terms, both are voiceless, but the first is unaspirated, the second aspirated. Being aware of this will help you to adjust to what you hear; and remembering to articulate the column I initials ‘lightly’ should keep you from sounding too foreign.

#### Row 1

These consonants are ‘labials’ – all involve the lips. Pinyin writes the sound ‘waw’ (cf. English ‘paw’) with just an o only after the labials; otherwise it writes it uo. Thus bo, po, mo, fo rhyme with duo, tu, nuo, luo (the latter set not shown in the table above). In other words, o by itself always equals uo (and never ou). Apparently, the creators of pinyin felt that after the labial initials it was unnecessary to indicate the labial onset with ‘u’. It will be important to keep the sound of o / uo separate from that of ou, which rhymes with both syllables of English ‘oh no’.

#### Rows 3, 4 and 5 – the crucial rows!

With z, c, and s in row 3, the tongue is flat and touching the back of the teeth at the gum line. The letter i following row 3 initials is *not* pronounced ‘ee’; it simply represents a continuation of the voicing of the consonantal sound. So for zi, ci, si, think ‘dzz’, ‘tsz’, ‘ssz’ (as indicated on the left of the chart). English does not have consonants comparable to the first two row-3 initials, z and c, except at the end of words and across root boundaries: *pads*; *cats*. In German and Russian, though, similar sounds do occur at the beginning of words, eg German *zehn* [dz-] ‘ten’, or Russian *cená* [ts-] ‘price’. [The last, also written with a c, suggests the source of the pinyin convention.]

With zh, ch, sh and r in row-4, the tip of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth (on or near the rough area behind the teeth known as the alveolar ridge) in what is called a retroflex position. As with the row-3 initials, the letter i in this position

represents only a persistence of the consonantal sound. So for zhi, chi, shi and ri, think ‘zhr’, ‘chr’, ‘shr’, and ‘rr’. In English, an ‘r’ following a consonant will often produce the retroflex articulation of the tongue that is characteristic of the row-4 consonants; so another way to get your tongue in the correct position for those initials is to make reference to English, and match zh to the ‘dr’ of ‘drill’, ch to the ‘tr’ of ‘trill’, sh to the ‘shr’ of ‘shrill’ and r to the ‘r’ of ‘rill’.

Finally, with j, q, and x of row-5, the tongue is positioned like the ‘yie’ in English ‘yield’; and this time, the letter i is pronounced ee, so for ji, qi, xi think ‘jyee’, ‘chyee’, ‘syee’. Later, you will see that row-5 initials are only followed by the written vowels i and ü. The first will always be pronounced ‘ee’ in this context, the second, always ‘ü’.

#### The initial-r of row-4

R-sounds vary considerably among languages: the Scots trill their tongue tips; the Parisians flutter their uvulas; Spanish flap their tongues; and Barbara Walters (a TV news broadcaster and interviewer) has an r that sounds like a cross between ‘r’ and ‘w’. The Chinese r is different again; it has a little bit of a buzz to it. Like zh, ch, and sh, it is retroflex (with tongue tip up) so it resembles the initial sound of English ‘rill’ or ‘ridge’; but it also has friction like the ‘s’ in ‘pleasure’ (or French *je* ‘I’). You will observe considerable variation in the quality of Chinese r, depending on the following vowel and on the particular speaker. Examples: rén, rè, rù, ràng, ruò, ròu, rì.

#### **Exercise 3.**

a) Try pronouncing the following syllables, randomly selected from rows 3, 4 and 5 initials, on level (ie 1<sup>st</sup>) tone:

qi	si	zhi	zi	ji	qi	si	ri	chi
xi	shi	ci	zhi	qi	si	chi	ji	xi

b) Now try pronouncing these Chinese names:

Cí Xì	Qí Báishí	Lǐ Shízhēn	Qízhōu
(last empress)	(famous calligrapher)	(16 <sup>th</sup> C herbalist, from <i>Qizhou</i> )	

### **3.3 An expanded chart of initials**

The conventional chart of initial consonants exhibits a rather restricted and idiosyncratic set of rhymes. We can make the initial consonant chart a little more comprehensive by adding one or two lines to each row, as follows:

	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
(1)	bo	po	mo	fo
	ban	pan	man	fan

(2)	de duo dai	te tuo tai	ne nuo nai	le luo lai
(3)	zi zao	ci cao	si sao	
(4)	zhi zhuo zhou	chi chuo chou	shi shuo shou	ri ruo rou
(5)	ji ju jian	qi qu qian	xi xu xian	
(6)	ge gan	ke kan	he han	

#### 4 Rhymes

A table showing all possible rhymes follows below. It is too long and complicated to be quickly internalized like the chart of initials, but you can practice reading the rows aloud with the help of a teacher or native speaker. You can also map your progress through the rhymes by circling syllables, or adding meaningful examples, as you learn new vocabulary. The table is organized by main vowel (a, e, i, o, u, ü), and then within each vowel, by medial (i, u and ü) and final (i, o/u, n, ng). The penultimate column, marked ‘w/o C<sub>i</sub>’ (ie ‘without initial consonant’), lists syllables that lack an initial consonant (with the rarer ones placed in parentheses) and so begin with a (written) vowel or medial (the latter always represented with an initial y or w). The final column gives pronunciation hints. Asterisks (\*), following certain numbered rows, mark sets that need special attention. Final-r, whose special properties were mentioned above, is treated separately.

<i>Rhymes with (a):</i>		<i>egs</i>						<i>w/o C<sub>i</sub></i>
1	a	ta	cha	da	ma	ba	la	a
2	a-i	tai	chai	dai	mai	chai	zai	ai
3	a-o	tao	chao	dao	pao	zao	rao	ao
4	a-n	tan	ran	zhan	can	lan	pan	an
5	a-ng	dang	sang	zhang	mang	lang	zang	ang
6	i-a	jia	qia	xia				ya
7	i-a-o	jiao	qiao	xiao				yao
8*	<b>i-a-n</b>	<b>jian</b>	<b>qian</b>	<b>xian</b>				<b>yan</b> [yen]
9	i-a-ng	jiang	qiang	xiang				yang
10	u-a	hua	gua	zhua	shua			wa
11	u-a-i	chuai						(wai)
12	u-a-n	huan	guan	zhuan	shuan	cuan		wan
13	u-a-ng	huang	guang	zhuang	shuang			wang [wahng]

**Rhymes with (e)**

14	e	zhe	che	she	re	le	e	[uh]
15	e-i	zhei	shei	lei	fei	bei	(ei)	[ay]
16	e-n	zhen	shen	fen	cen	men	en	[uhn]
17	e-ng	leng	sheng	ceng	deng	zheng	(eng)	[uhng]
19	i-e	jie	xie	lie	mie		ye	[yeh]
20*	u-e	jue	que	xue	nüe	lue	yue	[yüeh]

**Rhymes with (i)****the 'ee' rhymes**

21a	i	li	bi	ti			yi	[yee]
21b		ji	qi	xi			yi	[yee]
22	i-n	jin	qin	xin	lin	bin	yin	[yeen]
23	i-ng	jing	qing	xing	ling	bing	ying	[yeeng]
24*	u-i	dui	gui	shui	rui	chui	[-way]	wei [way]

**the 'buzzing' i-rhymes**

25*	i	zi	ci	si			[dzz, tsz...]
26	i	zhi	chi	shi	ri		[jr, chr...]

**Rhymes with (o)**

27*	o	bo	po	mo	fo		[-waw]	
28	u-o	duo	tuo	guo	shuo	zuo	[-waw]	wo [waw]
29*	o-u	zhou	zou	dou	hou	chou	[-oh]	ou [oh]
30	o-ng	zhong	dong	long	zong			
31	i-o-ng	jiong	qiong	xiong				yong

**Rhymes with (u)****the 'oo' rhymes**

32	u	shu	lu	zhu	zu	cu	[-oo]	wu [woo]
33*	u-n	shun	lun	zhun	kun	cun	[-wuhn]	wen [wuhn]
34*	i-u	jiu	qiu	xiu	liu	diu	[-yoo ~ -yeo]	you [yeo]

**Rhymes with (ü)****the 'ü' rhymes**

35*	u	ju	qu	xu	lǔ	nǔ	[-yü]	yu [yü]
36	u-n	jün	qün	xün			[-yün]	yun [yün]

**4.1 Notes on the rhymes**

The relationship between the i- and u-rhymes and C<sub>i</sub>

Recall that in the C<sub>i</sub> chart presented earlier, the row-4 C<sub>i</sub> (zh, ch, sh, r) are distinguished from the row-5 (j, q, x) by position of the tongue. In English terms, the distinction is a 'j', 'ch' or 'sh' with the tongue in the position of 'dr', 'tr' or 'shr' (respectively), versus a 'j', 'ch' or 'sh' with the tongue in the position of the 'y' of 'yield' (ji, qi, xi). But this difference, even if it is appreciated, seems, nonetheless, very slight. And, indeed, it would be much more difficult to perceive it if the vowels that followed were identically pronounced. But they never are!

Note that row-5 C<sub>i</sub> initials (j, q, x) are ONLY followed by the sounds (not the written letters, the sounds!) ‘ee’ and ‘ü’, written i and u, respectively. Here are some examples:

ji, jie, jian, qi, qie, qian, xi, xie, xian; ju, jue, jun, qu, que, qun, xu, xue, xun.

Row-4 C<sub>i</sub>, on the other hand (and the same goes for row-3) are NEVER followed by the sounds ‘ee’ and ‘ü’:

zhi, zi, zhu, zu, zhan, zan, chi, ci, chu, cu, chan, chen etc.

Because the creators of pinyin let i and u each represent two different sounds, this complementary distribution is obscured: the vowels of ji and zhi look alike, but they do not sound alike; the same for ju and zhu. So if you hear ‘chee’ it must be written qi, for ‘ee’ never follows ch; if you hear ‘chang’, it must be written chang, for q can only be followed by the sound ‘ee’. And so on.

#### Exercise 4.

The following syllables all contain the written vowels i and u. Practice reading them clearly, on a single tone. As with all the exercises in this lesson, repeat daily until confident.

chi qi xie qu chu chun jia qin cu qu shun  
qun shu ju ci xu zi zhu shi xi xia qu

#### 4.2 The value of the letter ‘e’

The value of e also violates the expectations of English speakers. It is ‘uh’ in all contexts (ze, deng, chen) except where it follows written i or u, when it is pronounced ‘eh’ (xie, nie, xue), or when it precedes a written i, where it is pronounced ‘ey’ (lei, bei, zei).

#### Exercise 5.

a) Practice reading the following syllables containing e:

chen wei zhen xie ben ren lei re bei jie e leng zei che bie

b) Now try pronouncing the following proper names:

[uh]	[uh]	[eh]	[ey]
Zhōu Ēnlái (premier)	Máo Zédōng (chairman)	Jiǎng Jièshí (Chiang Kai-shek)	Běijīng
Lǐ Dēnghuī (former Tw pres.)	Éméi shān (Omei Mtn.)	Lièníng (Lenin)	Sòng Měilíng (wife of Chiang)

### 4.3 The ‘o’ rhymes: ou versus uo / o

On early encounters, it is easy to confuse pinyin rhymes that are spelled similarly, such as -ou and -uo. This can lead to some pronunciation problems that are very difficult to correct later, so you need to make sure you master them early. The rhyme ou, with the ‘O’ leading, is pronounced like the name of the letter ‘O’ (in English) – rhyming with ‘know’. The rhyme, uo, on the other hand, with the ‘O’ trailing, is pronounced like ‘war’ without the final ‘r’. However, as you now know, after the row-1 C<sub>i</sub>, uo is spelled o: bo, po, mo, fo rhyme with duo, tuu, nuu and luo.

#### Exercise 6.

a) Here are some more names (mostly), all containing ‘o’:

Bōlán (Poland)	Sūzhōu (city near Shanghai)	Mòxīgē (Mexico)
luòtuo (camel)	Zhāng Yímóu (film director)	Zhōu Ēnlái (premier)
luóbo (radish)	Guō Mòruò (20 <sup>th</sup> C writer)	Lǐ Bó (aka Lǐ Bái) (Tang poet)

b) And more single syllables, which you can read on a tone of your choosing:

mou tuo bo fo zhou duo po dou zuo fou luo rou

### 4.4 The ü-rhymes

The first note in §4.1 (under the list of rhymes) makes the point that many of the ü-rhymes are revealed by the class of consonantal initial. Written ü after row-5 initials (j, q, x) is always pronounced ü; after any other initial, it is ‘oo’; thus (with any particular tone): zhu - ju, chu - qu, shu - xu, but pu, fu, du, ku, hu, etc. However, the sound ‘ü’ does occur after two initials other than the j, q and x of row-5. It occurs after n and l, as well. In these cases, ü may contrast with u, and the difference has to be shown on the vowel, not on the initial: lù ‘road’ versus lǜ ‘green’; nǚ ‘a crossbow’ versus nǚ ‘female’. In addition to being a core vowel, the sound ‘ü’ also occurs as a medial. Again, when it follows row-5 initials, it is written as ü: jue, que, xue; but following l or n it is written with ü: lüèzì ‘abbreviation’; nüèjì ‘malaria’. In the latter cases, it is redundant, since there is no contrast üe versus ue.

## 5 Miscellany

### 5.1 Tonal shifts

Before leaving the survey of sounds and notation, we need to return to the subject of tone, and take note of the phenomenon of tonal shifts (called ‘tone sandhi’ by linguists). It turns out that in certain contexts, tones undergo shifts from one to the other. (In Mandarin, the contexts where this occurs are very limited; in regional languages such as

Hokkien, such shifts are much more pervasive.) We will mention these shifts here, and then practice producing them more systematically over the course of later units.

### 5.2 Low-tone shift

If two low tones (tone-3s) appear consecutively *in the same phrase*, the first shifts to a rising tone:

3 + 3	>	2 + 3	
low + low	>	rising + low	
hěn + hǎo	>	hén hǎo	‘good’
hěn + lěng	>	hén lěng	‘cold’
Lǐ + lǎoshī	>	Lí lǎoshī	‘Professor Lee’

It is, of course, possible to have three or more low tones in a row, but such cases will be considered later.

### 5.3 Two single-word shifts

There are also a few more idiosyncratic shifts that involve only single words. The negative, bu, is falling tone except when followed by another falling tone, in which case it shifts to rising tone: bù hǎo ‘not well’, but bú lèi ‘not tired’. In the latter case, the result is a trajectory like the sides of a mountain, up, then down, and students in the past have kept track of this shift by calling it the ‘Fuji shift’, after Mount Fuji (which is, of course, in Japan, not China). Below, bu is shown in combination with some adjectival verbs (called Stative Verbs in Chinese grammatical tradition); these sets (involving stative verbs from the conversational material in Unit 1) should be repeated regularly until fully internalized.

	bù gāo	‘not tall’	
	bù máng	‘not busy’	
	bù hǎo	‘not well’	
<i>And exaggerated &gt;</i>	bú lèi	‘not tired’	bú è ‘not hungry’
	bú rè	‘not hot’	bú cuò ‘not bad’

Another single-word shift involves the numeral yī ‘one’. In counting, and in many compounds, it is level toned: yī, èr, sān, sì ‘1, 2, 3, 4’; yīshēng. But where yī is grammatically linked to a following ‘measure word’, it shows the same tonal shift as bu, rising before a falling tone (yí fēn ‘a copy’), but falling before any other (yì bāo ‘a pack’).

	yì zhāng	‘a [table]’
	yì tiáo	‘a [fish]’
	yì běn	‘a [book]’
<i>but</i>	yí fēn	‘a copy [of a newspaper]’

Note that the low tone shift (hěn + hǎo > hén hǎo) applies to any word (or syllable) that fits the grammatical condition (of being within a phrase); but the shift from falling to rising affects only a few words, including bu and yi.

#### 5.4 The apostrophe

In certain contexts, an apostrophe appears between the syllables of a compound written in pinyin: Xī'ān [the name of a city in China]; hǎi'ōu 'seagull'; chǒng'ài 'dote on'. The apostrophe is used when a syllable beginning with a vowel letter (a, e, o) is preceded (without space) by another syllable; in other words, where the syllable boundary is ambiguous. By convention, the apostrophe is only used when the trailing syllable begins with a vowel; a word like yīngān, with two potential syllable divisions, is always to be interpreted as yīn + gān, never yīng + ān (which would be yīng'ān).

### 6 Writing connected text in pinyin

Unlike earlier systems of Chinese phonetic notation, some of which were intended as fully fledged auxiliary writing systems that could co-exist with (or even replace) characters, pinyin was intended as an adjunct to characters, used to indicate pronunciation and to provide a means for alphabetical ordering. For this reason, the rules and conventions for writing connected text in pinyin were not well defined at first. However increasing use of computers for the production of text and in everyday communication, as well as the proliferation of contact between China and the rest of the world has put a premium on the use of pinyin. Nowadays, in addition to its use in pedagogical materials such as this book, pinyin is used for emailing, for input in word processing, for url or email addresses, and to complement characters on advertisements, announcements, and menus, particularly those intended for an international audience in Chinese cities and abroad.

In 1988, the State Language Commission issued a document with the translated title of “The Basic Rules for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography,” and with a few minor exceptions, this textbook conforms to those proposed rules. [The ABC Chinese-English Dictionary, cited at the end of the Background chapter, contains a translation of this document as an appendix.] Only two general points will be mentioned here. First, normal punctuation practices hold. Sentences begin with capital letters, as do proper names; they end with periods, and other punctuation marks are used more or less as in English. Second, words, not syllables, are enclosed by spaces. Thus ‘teacher’ is written lǎoshī, not lǎo shī. Characters, by contrast, which always represent syllable-length units, are separated by a space regardless of word boundaries. Of course, defining what a word is can be problematical, but pinyin dictionaries or glossaries can be relied upon to make those decisions for us. Other conventions, such as the use of the hyphen, will be noted when needed. So when you write pinyin, it should look like this:

Gémìng bú shì qǐngkè chīfàn....

*revolution not be invite-guests eat-meal*

Revolution isn't [like] inviting guests over for a meal....

Mao Zedong



Writing pinyin in this way makes it readable. And in fact, where emailing in characters is restricted by technical problems, pinyin can serve even without tone marks so long as the above orthographical conventions are observed: Geming bu shi qingke chifan....

## 7 Recapitulation

That completes our survey of the sounds and transcription of Mandarin Chinese. Already you will be able to pronounce the names of Chinese people and places considerably better than television and radio newscasters and announcers generally do. Exercise 7 reviews what you have covered in this lesson.

### Exercise 7

a) Write out the formula for all possible pinyin syllables; list the medials; list the finals.

b) Place the tone marks given in the parentheses in the correct position in the syllables:

xue (/)      bei (–)      sou (v)      jie (\)      bie (/)      suo (v)

c) List (or recite) 12 surnames, grouped by tone.

d) Write out the table of initial consonants. How many rows are there? Which rows are particularly problematical? What sounds (and vowel symbols) can follow the row-5 initials?

*e) Pronounce the pairs on the tone indicated. Note: in this exercise, as well as in (h) below, not all syllables are actual Chinese words on the tone cited; cf. English 'brink' and 'blink', 'bring' and 'bling', but only 'brick' – no 'blick' (yet).*

i. (tone 1)      qī – cī, xī – sī, jī – zī, qū – cū, xū – sū, jū – zū

ii. (tone 2)      zī – zhī, cī – chī, jī – zhī, xī – shī, sī – shī, qī – chī

iii. (tone 3)      de – dei, ge – gei, le – lei, zhe – zhei

iv. (tone 3)      bie – bei, lie – lei, pie – pei, die – dei.

v. (tone 1)      pō–pōu, bō–duo, luo–lou, tuo–pō, ruo–rou, mō–luo, tuo–tōu

f) Pronounce the following personal and place names:

Zhōu Ēnlái  
(premier)

Máo Zédōng  
(chairman)

Jiǎng Jièshí  
(Chiang Kai-shek)

Cáo Yǔ  
(20<sup>th</sup> C playwright)

Lǐ Dēnghuī  
(former Tw pres.)

Lǐ Xiāngjūn  
(a patriotic courtesan)

Sòng Měilíng  
(wife of Chiang)

Wáng Zhìzhì  
(b-ball player)

Dèng Xiǎopíng (post Mao leader)	Zhū Róngjī (recent premier)	Lǐ Xiǎolóng (Bruce Lee)	Cáo Cǎo (historical figure)
Běijīng (capital)	Xī'ān (in Shaanxi)	Guǎngzhōu (Canton city)	Zhèngzhōu (city in Henan)
Sìchuān (province)	Jiāngxī (province)	Chóngqìng (city in W. China)	Chǔxióng (city in Yunnan)

g) Apply the tone-change rules to the following phrases:

hěn lěng cold	bu gāo not tall	lǎobǎn 'boss'	bu guì cheap	lǎo Lǐ old Lee	yì běn one book
bu hǎo not good	yǔsǎn umbrella	bu duì wrong	nǐ hǎo hello	bu cuò not bad	yì fēn one copy

h) Read the sets listed below aloud. Each set of three syllables follows the pattern 'rising, rising, falling', like the usual list intonation of English '1, 2, 3', or 'boats, trains, planes'; lá, wéi, jìn!

lá	wéi	jìn!
láo	tái	dù!
sóu	sí	mìng!
zí	xiá	qìng!
ní	zhí	hòu!
lái	duó	zhèn!
fó	qí	cì!
xíng	cuó	shì!
móu	guó	shòu!
rén	béi	zhà!

## Coda

Chinese who studied English in China in the sloganeering days prior to the 80s can often remember their first English sentence, because in those days textbook material was polemical and didactic and lesson content was carefully chosen for content and gravity. So let your first sentence also carry some weight, and be appropriate for the endeavors you are about to begin. Here it is, then:

種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆。

Zhòng guā dé guā, zhòng dòu dé dòu.

plant melon get melon, plant bean get bean

'[You] reap what you sow.'

(Cf. xīguā 'water melon'; dòuzi 'beans; peas'.)

Zàijiàn.

'Goodbye. (again-see)'

Míngtiān jiàn.

'See you tomorrow! (tomorrow see)'



**Shrine in a Kūnmíng restaurant to Guāndì, a guardian spirit revered by owners of small businesses, soldiers, secret societies and others. [JKW 1997]**

## UNIT 1

Jiǔ céng zhī tái, qǐ yú lěi tǔ; qiān lǐ zhī xíng shǐ yú zú xià.  
 9 level tower, begin by piling earth, 1000 mile journey begins with foot down  
*A tall tower begins with the foundation; a long journey begins with a single step.*  
 Lǎozǐ

### Contents

- 1.1 Conventions
- 1.2 Pronunciation
- 1.3 Numbering and ordering
- 1.4 Stative Verbs
- 1.5 Time and tense
- 1.6 Pronouns *Exercise 1*
- 1.7 Action verbs
- 1.8 Conventional greetings *Exercise 2*
- 1.9 Greeting and taking leave
- 1.10 Tones *Exercise 3*
- 1.11 Summary
- 1.12 Rhymes and rhythms

### 1.1 Conventions

The previous Unit on ‘sounds and symbols’ provided the first steps in learning to associate the pinyin transcription of Chinese language material with accurate pronunciation. The task will continue as you start to learn to converse by listening to conversational material while reading it in the pinyin script. However, in the early units, it will be all too easy to fall back into associations based on English spelling, and so occasionally (as in the previous overview), Chinese cited in pinyin will be followed by a more transparent transitional spelling [placed in brackets] to alert you to the new values of the letters, eg: máng [mahng], or hěn [huhn].

In the initial units, where needed, you are provided not only with an idiomatic English translation of Chinese material, but also, in parentheses, with a word-for-word gloss. The latter takes you into the world of Chinese concepts and allows you to understand how meanings are composed. The following conventions are used to make the presentation of this information clearer.

#### Summary of conventions

- a) Parentheses (...) enclose literal meanings, eg: Máng ma? (‘be+busy Q’)
- b) Plusses (+) indicate one-to-many *where needed*, eg: nín ‘you+POL’
- c) Capitals (Q) indicate *grammatical notions*, eg: Q for ‘question’; POL for ‘polite’. In cases where there is no easy label for the notion, the Chinese word itself is cited in capitals, with a fuller explanation to appear later: Nǐ ne? (‘you NE’)

- d) Spaces ( ) enclose words, eg: hěn hǎo versus shūfu; used instead of + in literal glosses, eg hǎochī ('be good-eat').
- e) Hyphens ( - ) used in standard pinyin transcription to link certain constituents, eg dì-yī 'first' or mǎma-hūhū 'so-so'. In English glosses, hyphens indicate meanings of the constituent parts of Chinese compounds, eg hǎochī ('be good-eat').
- f) Brackets [ ] indicate pronouns and other material that is obligatorily expressed in one language, not in the other: Máng ma? 'Are [you] busy?' Or they may enclose notes on style or other relevant information: bàng 'be good; super' [colloquial].
- g) Angle brackets < > indicate optional material: <Nǐ> lèi ma? ie, either Nǐ lèi ma? or Lèi ma?
- h) Non-italic / *italic* indicates turns in a conversation.

## 1.2 Pronunciation

To get your vocal organs ready to pronounce Chinese, it is useful to contrast the articulatory settings of Chinese and English by pronouncing pairs of words selected for their similarity of sound. Thus kǎo 'to test' differs from English 'cow' not only in tone, but also in vowel quality.

- |    |      |              |    |     |      |    |      |       |
|----|------|--------------|----|-----|------|----|------|-------|
| a) | kǎo  | cow          | b) | xìn | sin  | c) | shòu | show  |
|    | hǎo  | how          |    | qín | chin |    | zhōu | Joe   |
|    | nǎo  | now          |    | jīn | gin  |    | sǒu  | so    |
|    | chǎo | chow[-time]  |    | xìn | seen |    | ròu  | row   |
|    | sǎo  | sow['s ear]  |    | jīn | Jean |    | dǒu  | dough |
|    | bǎo  | [ship's] bow |    | lín | lean |    | tóu  | toe   |
- 
- |    |     |        |     |        |    |      |       |
|----|-----|--------|-----|--------|----|------|-------|
| d) | pāo | paw    | duō | doo[r] | e) | bízi | beads |
|    | bō  | bo[r]e | tuō | to[r]e |    | lǐzi | leads |
|    | mō  | mo[r]e | luō | law    |    | xízi | seeds |

## 1.3 Numbering and ordering

This section contains information that can be practiced daily in class by counting off, or giving the day's date.

### 1.3.1 The numbers, 1 – 10:

yī	èr	sān	sì	wǔ	liù	qī	bā	jiǔ	shí
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### 1.3.2 Beyond 10

Higher numbers are formed quite regularly around shí ‘ten’ (or a multiple of ten), with following numbers additive (shísān ‘13’, shíqī ‘17’) and preceding numbers multiplicative (sānshí ‘30’, qīshí ‘70’):

shíyī	shí’èr	shísì	èrshí	èrshíyī	èrshí’èr	èrshísì	sānshí	sānshíyī
11	12	14	20	21	22	24	30	31

### 1.3.3 The ordinal numbers

Ordinals are formed with a prefix, dì (which by pinyin convention, is attached to the following number with a hyphen):

dì-yī	dì-èr	dì-sān	dì-sì	dì-wǔ, etc.
1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>

### 1.3.4 Dates

Dates are presented in descending order in Chinese, with year first (nián, *think [nien]*), then month (yuè, *think [yu-eh]*) and day (hào). Years are usually presented as a string of digits (that may include líng ‘zero’) rather than a single figure: yī-jiǔ-jiǔ-liù nián ‘1996’; èr-líng-líng-sān nián ‘2003’. Months are formed regularly with numerals: yīyuè ‘January’, èryuè ‘February’, shí’èryuè ‘December’.

èrlínglíngsān nián bāyuè sān hào	‘August 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003’
yījiǔbāwǔ nián èryuè shíbā hào	‘February 18 <sup>th</sup> , 1985’

#### Notes

1. Amongst northern Chinese, yīyuè often shows the *yī* tone shift in combination with a following day: yíyuè sān hào. Qī ‘7’ and bā ‘8’, both level-toned words, sometimes show the same shift in dates (as well as in other contexts prior to a fourth toned word): qíyuè liù hào; báyuè jiǔ hào.
2. In the written language, rì ‘day’ (a much simpler character) is often used in place of hào: thus written bāyuè sān rì (八月三日), which can be read out as such, would be spoken as bā ~ báyuè sān hào (which in turn, could be written verbatim as 八月三号).

### 1.3.5 The celestial stems

Just as English sometimes makes use of letters rather than numbers to indicate a sequence of items, so Chinese sometimes makes use of a closed set of words with fixed order known as the ‘ten stems’ (shígān), or the ‘celestial stems’ (tiāngān), for counting purposes. The ten stems have an interesting history, which will be discussed in greater detail along with information on the Chinese calendar in §4.6.2. For now, they will be used in much the same way that, in English, roman numerals or letters of the alphabet are used to mark subsections of a text, or turns in a dialogue. The first four or five of the ten are much more frequent than the others, simply because they occur early in the sequence.

The ten celestial stems (tiāngān)

jiǎ 甲	yǐ 乙	bǐng 丙	dīng 丁	wù 戊
A	B	C	D	E
jǐ 己	gēng 庚	xīn 辛	rén 壬	guǐ 癸
F	G	H	I	J

**1.4 Stative Verbs**

The verb is the heart of the Chinese sentence. Young urban speakers of Chinese may slip material from English or other languages into the noun position in a sentence (Wǒ yǒu lab. ‘I have a *lab*’), and nouns such as jítā ‘guitar’ with foreign origins have been incorporated in the language as a result of persistent contact with other cultures. But very rarely does foreign language material show up in the verb position.

Some comparisons with English also reveal the centrality of the verb to the Chinese sentence schema. In Chinese, where the context makes the participants clear, verbs do not need to be anchored with pronouns – as they do in English:

Jiǎ	Máng ma?	Are [you] busy?
Yǐ	Hěn máng.	Yes, [I] am.

In English, ‘am’ is not a possible response to the question ‘are you busy?’. A pronoun is required: ‘I am.’ However, in the English answer, the verb ‘busy’ does not need to be repeated – ‘I am’ rather than ‘I am busy’. Chinese behaves oppositely from English, as our example shows. Pronouns are often **not** expressed when the context makes the reference clear. On the other hand, verbs tend to be **reiterated** in the answer, without the need of an equivalent to the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ of English.

**1.4.1 Types of verbs**

As you encounter words in Chinese, you will find that it is useful to categorize them into groups and subgroups (the traditional parts of speech and their subclasses), such as nouns (with subtypes such as countable and non-countable), verbs (with subtypes such as transitive and non-transitive), pronouns (eg, personal pronouns and demonstratives), and adverbs (eg, manner adverbs and degree adverbs). Such categories capture useful generalizations about how words behave. An adverb, for example, will always appear before a verb (or other adverb).

It is also useful to be able to talk about the components of a sentence: subjects, predicates, adverbials, modifiers, etc. A general schema for the sentence hěn máng would be a null subject, and a predicate consisting of an adverb (hěn) and a verb (máng). It is not necessary to be adept at using the linguistic nomenclature, but it is important to be

able to understand the notion of classes of words and positions within sentence structure so that generalizations can be noted.

For Chinese verbs, it will be useful to distinguish a number of classes. In this lesson, we will focus on two. One resembles what are called adjectives in English and many other languages: hǎo ‘be good’, máng ‘be busy’, è ‘be hungry’. As the English glosses show, these words do not require an additional form of the verb ‘to be’ (‘are, am, is, etc.’) when they are used as predicates in Chinese: Lèi ma? ‘Are [you] tired?’ / Hěn lèi. ‘[I] am.’ The difference is shown by translating the Chinese words as ‘be+tired’, ‘be+good’, etc. Because such words convey states rather than actions, they are called ‘stative verbs’, abbreviated as ‘SVs’. Strictly speaking, SVs should always be glossed as ‘be+adjective’ (when they are being used as predicates). But once the notion is familiar, we will often fall back on the more convenient practice of glossing them with English adjectives: máng ‘busy’; shūfu ‘comfortable’.

Another general class of verbs involve actions: chī ‘eat’; xǐzǎo ‘to wash’; zǒu ‘to walk; leave’. These will simply be called action verbs, abbreviated V<sub>act</sub>.

#### 1.4.2 Questions and positive responses

You can begin by learning to ask questions with SVs, and to give either positive or negative responses. Assuming that the context makes explicit [subject] pronouns unnecessary, then one way to ask questions that seek confirmation or denial - *yes-no* questions - is to add the final ‘question particle’ ma to the proposal:

Hǎo ma?	Are [you] well?
Máng ma?	Is [she] busy?
Lèi ma?	Are [you] tired?
È ma?	Is [he] hungry?
Kě ma?	Are [you] thirsty?
Jǐnzhāng ma?	Are [they] nervous?
Shūfu ma?	Are [you] comfortable?
Lěng ma?	Are [you] cold?
Rè ma?	Is [it] hot?
Gāo ma?	Is [she] tall?
Duì ma?	Is [it] correct?

Notes: *máng* [mahng]  
*lèi* rhymes with English ‘say’; *duì* (and *wèi*), rhyme with ‘way’  
*è* [uh]; cf. *rè* [ruh] and *hěn* [huhn]  
*jǐnzhāng* [jeen-j!ahng]; *shūfu* [sh!oofoo] – ! reminds you to raise the tip of your tongue towards the roof of your mouth.

Positive responses repeat the verb, usually with an adverb. The default adverb, where no other is chosen, is hěn, usually glossed as ‘very’, however, in contexts such as these, hěn does little more than support the positive orientation of the sentence, and so is best left untranslated. SVs such as duì ‘correct’, which are ‘all or nothing’, do not occur with degree adverbs, such as hěn.



Máng ma?	Hěn máng.	Yes, [I] am.
Kě ma?	Hěn kě.	Yes, [I] am. <i>Apply the tone rule!</i>
Gāo ma?	Hěn gāo.	Yes, [she] is.
Duì ma?	Duì.	Yes, [it] is.

Notice that unlike English, where the typical positive answer indicates affirmation with ‘yes’ before going on to answer the question, Mandarin has only the direct answer.

### 1.4.3 Negative responses

Negative responses are usually formed with bù ‘not the case’— recall that the tone of bù is conditioned by that of the following syllable.

Máng ma?	Bù máng.	No, [I]’m not.
Kě ma?	Bù kě.	No, [I]’m not.
Gāo ma?	Bù gāo.	No, [she]’s not.
Duì ma?	Bù duì.	No, [it]’s not.

As with positive answers, Chinese has no direct equivalent to ‘no’, but simply offers a negated verb.

A less abrupt negative (but, again, not used with duì) is formed with bú (with tone shift) plus tài ‘too; very’:

Hǎo ma?	Bú tài hǎo.	No, not very.
Máng ma?	Bú tài máng.	No, not too.
Lèi ma?	Bú tài lèi.	
È ma?	Bú tài è.	

[Negative questions with ma, such as Nǐ bú lèi ma? ‘Aren’t you tired?’, will be dealt with in a later unit. While such questions are easy to form in Chinese, the responses follow patterns unfamiliar to speakers of English.]

### 1.4.4 V-not-V questions

Another way to form *yes-no* questions is to present the verb and its negative, as though offering both options. The negative, bu, in these constructions is often toneless in normal speech: hǎo bù hǎo is usually pronounced hǎo bu hǎo, or even hǎo bu hao. While *V-ma* questions slightly presuppose an answer congruent with the question – ie positive for positive questions, negative for negative questions, *V-not-V* questions are neutral. At this stage, you can regard the two as essentially equivalent:

Rè ma?	Hěn rè.
Rè bu rè?	Hěn rè.
Lěng ma?	Bù lěng.
Lěng bu lěng?	Bú tài lěng.

*Other examples*

Dùi bu duì?	Dùi.
Hǎo bu hǎo?	Hěn hǎo. <i>With tone shift!</i>
Máng bu máng?	Bù máng.
Lèi bu lèi?	Hěn lèi.
È bu è?	Bú tài è.
Kě bu kě?	Hěn kě.
Lěng bu lěng?	Hěn lěng.
Rè bu rè?	Bú tài rè.
Jǐn<zhāng> bu jǐnzhāng?	Bù jǐnzhāng.
Shū<fu> bu shūfu?	Bù shūfu.

*Note*

With two-syllable SVs, the 2<sup>nd</sup> syllable of the first, positive part of *V-not-V* questions often gets elided, as indicated by < > in the last two examples.

**1.4.5 Three degrees of response**

You can respond to the two kinds of *yes-no* questions positively, neutrally, or negatively; the typical neutral response makes use of the adverb hái (or, before other adverbs, háishì) ‘still; yet’: hái hǎo ‘so so; [I]’m okay (still okay)’.

## SUMMARY

SVs: hǎo, máng, lèi, è, kě, lěng, rè, gāo, shūfu, jǐnzhāng, duì				
Yes-No Qs		+	0	--
-ma	V-not-V			
Lèi ma?	Lèi bu lèi?	Hěn lèi.	Hái hǎo.	Bú lèi.    Bú tài lèi.
Jǐnzhāng ma?	Jǐn bu jǐnzhāng?	Hěn jǐnzhāng.	Hái hǎo.	Bù jǐnzhāng. Bú tài jǐnzhāng.

**1.5 Time and tense****1.5.1 Today, yesterday and tomorrow**

Speakers of English and other European languages take the verbal category of tense for granted: speaking of the past generally requires past tense. For Chinese (as well as many other languages), this is not so. Time words such as jīntiān ‘today’, zuótiān ‘yesterday’ (both of which share the root tiān ‘sky; day’), or dates (bā hào), may be added to simple sentences containing SVs without any change to the form of the verb, or any other addition to the sentence:

Zuótiān lěng ma?	Was [it] cold yesterday?	<Zuótiān> bú tài lěng.
Zuótiān rè bu rè?	Was [it] hot yesterday?	<Zuótiān> hěn rè!
Zuótiān hěn máng ma?	Were [you] busy yesterday?	<Zuótiān> hěn máng!

Jīntiān lèi bu lèi? Are [you] tired today? <Jīntiān> hái hǎo!  
 Èrshíbā hào hěn lěng. The 28<sup>th</sup> was quite cold.

*Note the differences in word order between the English and the Chinese in the previous examples:*

Was it cold? > It was cold. Lěng ma? > Hěn lěng.  
 Was it cold *yesterday*? Zuótiān lěng ma?

The appearance of a time word such as míngtiān (or a date) can be sufficient to indicate that an event is certain to occur in the future – something that is also true of English.

Wǒ míngtiān hěn máng. I'm busy tomorrow.

However, at times, Chinese does require some additional acknowledgement of the fact that, unlike the past and present, the future is uncertain. Thus, in talking about future weather, the word huì 'can; will; likely to' is in many cases added to the statement of futurity: Míngtiān huì hěn lěng ma? 'Will [it] be cold tomorrow?' Huì, while it does correspond to English 'will' in this example, is not actually as common as the latter. For the time being, you should be wary of talking about future states.

### 1.5.2 SVs *plus le*

Rather than the static notion of past versus present (or, more accurately, past versus non-past), Chinese is more sensitive to a dynamic notion of 'phase', or 'change'. For example, if a speaker wishes to underscore the relevance of a *new situation*, he can signal it by the addition of the sentence-final 'particle', le:

Zuótiān bù shūfu, jīntiān [I] didn't feel well yesterday, but [I]'m  
 hǎo le. okay today.

An explicit contrast between an earlier situation (zuótiān) and a current one (jīntiān) typically triggers this use of le. However, it is quite possible state the situation at both times without underscoring the change with le, too, as the examples below show.

Other words that can signal prior or current time include:

*earlier*

yǐqián 'formerly; before; used to [be]'  
běnlái 'originally; at first';  
cóngqián 'before; in the past'

*current*

xiànzài 'now; a present'  
zuìjìn 'recently; lately (most-near)'  
mùqián 'at present; currently (eyes-before)'

*Examples*

Yǐqián hěn jǐnzhāng, xiànzài hǎo le.	[I] was nervous yesterday, but [I]’m okay now.
Xiànzài bú è le!	[I]’m not hungry anymore!
Yǐqián bù shūfu.	[It] used to be uncomfortable.
Jīntiān rè le!	[It]’s gotten hot today!
Zuótiān hěn lèi, jīntiān hěn máng.	[I] was tired yesterday [and] I’m busy today!
Běnlái hěn máng, xiànzài hǎo le.	[I] was busy at first, but now [I]’m okay.
Mùqián hěn lěng, hěn bù shūfu.	It’s quite cold at present, [I]’m not comfortable.
Běnlái hěn lěng, zuìjìn rè le.	It used to be cold, but lately it’s gotten hot.
Cóngqián wǒ bù shūfu, zuìjìn hái hǎo.	In the past, I wasn’t comfortable, but recently, [I]’m okay.

Observe that it is the *new situation* that is associated with le, not the original state! The presence of le generally cancels out the need for a supporting adverb, such as hěn.

**1.6 Pronouns**

As many of the examples above show, Chinese often manages to keep track of people (or things) relevant to a situation without the use of pronouns. But pronouns are available where context alone might be insufficient – or where it might otherwise be more appropriate to use one. The set of personal pronouns in Chinese is relatively simple, and regular. They are presented in the following table, with notes following:

<i>singular</i>	<i>collective</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
wǒ	wǒmen	I, me	we, us
nǐ nín	nǐmen	you you [polite]	you [all]
tā	tāmen	he, she, [it] him, her	they, them

*Notes*

a) Tā tends to refer only to people (or to animals being treated as if they were people); in speech, at least, it rarely refers to things, and so rarely corresponds to English ‘it’. On those occasions when tā is used to refer to things, it is more common in object position, so it is more likely to occur in the Chinese equivalent

of the sentence ‘put it away’ than in ‘it’s in the drawer’. Chinese sometimes uses a demonstrative (zhè ‘this’ or nà ‘that’) where English has ‘it’, but generally it has no explicit correspondence at all.

b) The form nínmen (‘you+POL-MEN’) is rare, but does sometimes occur in letters, or in formal speech. The -men suffix (not usually toned, though sometimes cited in isolation with a rising tone) is most often found with pronouns, as shown. With nouns designating people, it can also occur as a ‘collective’ eg lǎoshī ‘teacher’, lǎoshīmen ‘teachers’. But even in such cases, -men should not be thought of as a plural marker, for it never co-occurs with numerals: sān ge lǎoshī ‘three teachers’, with no -men possible. In faster speech, wǒmen often becomes wǒm, tāmen, tām, and so on.

c) Mandarin speakers from Beijing and the northeast, also make a distinction (found in many languages) between wǒmen ‘we’ that includes speaker, addressee and others, and zán or zánmen (pronounced ‘zámen’, as if without the first ‘n’) ‘the two of us; we’. The latter includes the speaker and the person spoken to, but excludes others. Eg Zánmen zǒu ba! ‘Let’s leave [us, but not the others]’ – a phrase worth storing away as a prototype example for zánmen.

### 1.6.1 Names

Where the identification or status of a person requires more than a pronoun, then of course, Chinese has recourse to personal names, or names and titles (cf. §1.9.1). For now, suffice it to say that Chinese students often refer to each other either by personal name (at least two syllables), or by surname (xìng) prefixed by a syllable such as xiǎo ‘young’. Thus, Liú Guózhèng may be addressed by friends as Guózhèng or xiǎo Liú; Lǐ Dān, as Lǐ Dān (full name of two syllables) or xiǎo Lǐ.

### 1.6.2 The particle ne and the adverb yě

The particle ne, placed after subject nouns, has a number of uses. It may signal a pause for reflection, something particularly useful for learners:

Zuótiān ne, zuótiān hǎn rè.	Yesterday -- yesterday was hot.
Tā ne, tā hěn jīnzhāng.	[As for] him, he’s quite anxious.

It may also be used to signal follow-up questions. The response to a follow-up question often contains the adverb yě ‘also; too; as well’. Recall that adverbs are placed before verbs (including SVs) or other adverbs (such as bù):

Jiǎ	Yǐ
Jīntiān lèi ma?	Hěn lèi, nǐ ne?
Wǒ yě hěn lèi.	

Jīntiān rè bù rè?	Hěn rè.
Zuótiān ne?	Zuótiān yě hěn rè.
Nǐ jǐnzhāng ma?	Bù jǐnzhāng le. Nǐ ne?
Wǒ hái shì hěn jǐnzhāng.	Ng.
Xiǎo Wáng zuótiān bù shūfu. Jīntiān ne?	
Jīntiān hǎo le.	Ng.

*Notes*

1. Háishi ‘still’; cf. §1.7.1.
2. Spoken Chinese makes use of variety of ‘interjections’. Ng (with pronunciation ranging from a nasalized ‘uh’ to ‘n’) is one of them. On the falling tone, it indicates agreement, or as in the above example, understanding.

**Exercise 1.**

*Write down, and recite, what you would say under the circumstances; be prepared to shift roles:*

1. Ask him if [he] was busy yesterday?
2. Note that [it]’s quite cold today.
3. Remark that [it]’s gotten cold today.
4. Find out if young Li’s nervous.
5. Respond that [she] is [nervous].
6. Say that you are too.
7. Say [you] didn’t feel well yesterday.
8. Say that you’re better now.
9. Tell your friend [you]’re not very hungry.
10. Tell him that you’re okay today, [but] you were quite nervous before.
11. Ask your friend if [she]’s thirsty [or not].
12. Find out if your classmate is comfortable.
13. Say that [you]’re not hungry anymore.
14. Say that he was wrong.

**1.7 Action verbs**

While SVs attribute emotional or physical states to people or things,  $V_{act}$  involve deeds such as ‘eating’ or ‘going to class’.  $V_{act}$  are often subdivided into ‘transitive’, ie those that generally presuppose an object (‘read > a book’; ‘eat > a meal’); and ‘intransitive’, ie those that do not presuppose an object (‘walk’; ‘kneel’). However, languages differ as to how this distinction is actually realized. In English for example, when the verb ‘eat’ means ‘eat a meal’, English has the option of either not expressing an object (‘When do we eat?’), or using the generic noun ‘meal’ (‘We had a meal earlier’).

Chinese adopts a different strategy. In comparable sentences, rather than not mentioning an object for lack of a particular one, Chinese only has the option of providing a generic object like ‘meal’: Nǐ chīfàn le ma? ‘Have you eaten? (you eat-rice

LE Q)’. The core meaning of fàn, as shown in the gloss, is ‘cooked rice’, but in this context, its meaning is extended to ‘food’ or ‘meal’. When a particular kind of food is mentioned, then fàn will be replaced by specific words: chī miàn ‘eat noodles’, chī bāozi ‘eat dumplings’, chī zǎodiǎn ‘eat breakfast’, etc.

Another case in which Chinese provides a generic object where English has either an intransitive verb or one of a number of specific options is xǐzǎo ‘to bathe; take a bath/shower, etc.’ Xǐzǎo is composed of the verb xǐ ‘wash’ and zǎo, an element that no longer has independent status, but which is treated like an object. So while English uses an intransitive verb ‘to bathe’ or a specific object ‘take a bath’, Chinese provides a generic object, zǎo. When a specific object is needed, it substitutes for zǎo: xǐ yīfu ‘wash clothes’; xǐ liǎn ‘wash [one’s] face’, etc.

The following table gives verbs or verb+objects for events that tend to happen in the course of a day. [Polite inquiries about bathing are appropriate in tropical or sub-tropical climates.]

VERB	OBJECT	V-O
zǒu ‘leave’		
qǐlái ‘get up; rise’		
shuì ‘sleep’	jiào <i>bound form</i>	shuìjiào ‘go to bed; sleep’
chī ‘eat’	fàn ‘cooked rice’	chīfàn ‘eat; have a [proper] meal’
xǐ ‘wash’	zǎo <i>bound form</i>	xǐzǎo ‘bathe; take a bath etc.’
kàn ‘look at’	bào ‘newspaper’	kànbào ‘read the paper’
shàng ‘ascend’ xià ‘descend’	kè ‘class’	shàngkè ‘teach a class; attend class’ xiàkè ‘finish class; get out of class’
shàng ‘ascend’ xià ‘descend’	bān ‘job; shift’	shàngbān ‘go to work; start work’ xiàbān ‘get out of work’

### 1.7.1 Negative statements, with méiyǒu

With action verbs, the plain negative with bù usually indicates intention:

Wǒ bù zǒu.	I’m not leaving.
Tāmen bù xǐzǎo.	They’re not going to bathe.
Tā bù chī le.	He won’t eat anymore.

Such declarations, while possible, are in fact more likely to be cast in some less abrupt form, using verbs such as yào ‘want’ or xiǎng ‘feel like (think)’. We will get to such verbs quite soon, but at this stage, rather than talking about intentions, we will focus on whether events have happened or not. In such cases, the negation is formed with the negative of the verb yǒu ‘have; exist’. This is méiyǒu, or simply méi. [Yǒu is the one verb in Mandarin whose negative is not formed with bù – the one *irregular* verb, you might say.]

Méi chīfàn.	[We] didn't eat; [we] haven't eaten.
Méiyou xǐzǎo.	[I] didn't bathe; [I] haven't bathed.
Méi shàngbān.	[She] didn't go to work; [she] hasn't started work.

Since the action verbs introduced in this lesson involve events that can be expected to take place regularly over the course of the day, the adverb hái (or háishi before other adverbs) 'still; yet' is common in negative answers. Hái<shi> is frequently accompanied by the sentence-final particle, ne, which in general, conveys a tone of immediacy or suspense (as well as being associated with follow up questions, cf. §1.6.2).

Hái méi chīfàn ne.	[We] haven't eaten yet.
Hái méiyou xǐzǎo ne.	[I] haven't bathed yet.
Hái méi shàngbān.	[She] hasn't started work yet.

### 1.7.2 Positive statements, with le

As noted in §1.5.2, le with SVs signals a newly relevant state: jīntiān hǎo le. With  $V_{act}$ , the function of le is more diffuse, or at least it seems so from a learner's perspective. Le with  $V_{act}$ , much as it does with SVs, may signal a newly relevant situation – or phase. But with  $V_{act}$  what is relevant may be the initiation of the action, or it may be the conclusion of the action.

#### a) Initiation:

Zǒu le.	[They]'re off.
Chīfàn le	[They]'ve started [eating].
Shàngkè le.	[They]'re starting class.

#### b) Conclusion:

Zǒu le.	[They]'ve gone; they left.
Chīfàn le.	[We]'ve eaten; we ate.
Shàngkè le.	[They]'ve gone to class; [they] went to class.

'Conclusion' may seem like another way of saying 'past tense'; but there are reasons for avoiding any identification of le with [past] tense. You have already seen that with SVs, it is not the past situation that is marked with le, but the current one: Zuótiān bù shūfu, jīntiān hǎo le. And you will see many other cases where past tense in English does not correspond to the presence of le in Chinese. But more to the point: injecting the notion of past tense into our description of le suggests a static function quite at odds with that other, well-established dynamic function of le, to signal what is newly relevant.

For the time being, then, note that le has two faces: it signals the current relevancy of a new state or situation; and it signals the current relevancy of a completed event. While in the first case, le can appear with the negative, bù (bù lěng le 'it's not cold anymore'), in the second, it cannot – it can only be replaced by méi<you>, to form the negative (hái méi chī ne).



Lěng le	[It]'s gotten cold.
Bù lěng le.	[It]'s not cold anymore.
Shàngkè le.	Class is beginning; [they]'ve gone to class.
Bú shàngkè le.	[They]'re not going to class anymore.
Hái méi<you> shàngkè ne.	[They] haven't gone to class yet.

Confusion about the several senses of le with  $V_{act}$  can often be resolved by the addition adverbs, such as yǐjīng 'already':

Tāmen yǐjīng zǒu le.	They've already left.
Wǒ yǐjīng chīfàn le.	I've already eaten.
Yǐjīng xiàbān le.	[He]'s already quit [for the day].

### 1.7.3 Questions

Actions can be questioned with ma:

Chīfàn le ma?	Have [you] eaten [a meal]?
Xǐzǎo le ma?	Have [you] bathed?
Shàngbān le ma?	Has [she] started work?

Or with the *V-not-V* pattern, with the negative option reduced to méiyǒu (or just méi):

Chīfàn le méi<you>?
Xǐzǎo le méi<you>?
Shàngbān le méi<you>?

### 1.7.4 Summary of le-patterns

positive	negative
Rè le. It's gotten warm.	Bú rè le. It's not warm anymore.
Chī le.                      Shàngkè le. [We]'ve started.      Let's begin.	Wǒ bù chī le. I'm not eating anymore.
<Yǐjīng> zǒu le. [He]'s <already>left.	<Hái> méi<you> zǒu <ne>. [She] hasn't left <yet>.
Tāmen <yǐjīng> chīfàn le. They've <already> eaten.	Tāmen hái méi<you> chīfàn <ne>. They haven't eaten <yet>.

**1.7.5 Mini-conversations**

The near synonyms kěshì and dànshì, used in the following two conversations, are both comparable to English ‘but’.

*A.*

- |      |                                 |                                  |
|------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Jiǎ: | Xǐzǎo le ma?                    | Have [you] bathed?               |
| Yǐ:  | Xǐzǎo le, kěshì hái méi chīfàn! | I have, but I haven't eaten yet. |
| Jiǎ: | È ma?                           | Hungry?                          |
| Yǐ:  | Hěn è, nǐ ne?                   | Sure am; you?                    |
| Jiǎ: | O, wǒ – wǒ yǐjīng chī le.       | Oh, me – I've already eaten.     |
| Yǐ:  | Xiǎo Bì ne?                     | And young Bì?                    |
| Jiǎ: | Yǐjīng zǒu le, shàngbān le.     | [She]'s gone, [she]'s at work.   |
| Yǐ:  | O, shàngbān le.                 | Oh, [she]'s gone to work!        |

*B.*

- |      |   |                                  |
|------|---|----------------------------------|
| Jiǎ: | Jīntiān hěn rè!                               | It's hot today.                  |
| Yǐ:  | Ng, hěn rè. Nǐ chīfàn le ma?                  | Yeah, sure is. Have you eaten?   |
| Jiǎ: | Hái méi, wǒ bú è.                             | Not yet – I'm not hungry.        |
| Yǐ:  | Jǐnzhāng ma?                                  | Anxious?                         |
| Jiǎ: | Xiànzài hǎo le -- dànshì yǐqián hěn jǐnzhāng! | [I]'m fine now—but I was before! |
| Yǐ:  | Chén Bó yǐjīng zǒu le ma?                     | Has Chen Bo already left?        |
| Jiǎ: | Yǐjīng zǒu le, yǐjīng shàngkè le.             | Yes, he has, he's gone to class. |

**1.8 Conventional Greetings****1.8.1 The addition of guò (untuned)**

Questions about eating are often used ‘phatically’, to be sociable rather than to seek actual information. There are quite a number of variants on the basic Chīfàn le ma that may serve this purpose. One, that is particularly common with verbs that describe regularly occurring events (such as having meals, going to work), involves the addition of a post-verbal guò (usually untuned), whose root meaning is ‘to pass by, over, through’.

Guò can occur in both the question and in responses (both positive and negative), but it can also be dropped from the responses, as shown below.

Chīguo <fàn> le ma?

Chī <guo> le.

Hái méi <chī <guo>> ne.

### 1.8.2 Reductions

In context, utterances are likely to be reduced, along the following lines: méiyou > méi; chīfàn > chī (but xǐzǎo does not reduce to xǐ, since xǐ alone means to ‘wash’ rather than ‘bathe’). Thus, the following are all possible – though the more elliptical questions are likely to produce more elliptical answers. (The English glosses for the responses only suggest the differences.)

Q	A	(A)
Chīfàn le ma?	Chīfàn le.	I’ve eaten my meal.
Chīguo fàn le ma?	Chīguo fàn le.	I’ve had my meal.
Chī le ma?	Chī le.	I have.
Chīguo le ma?	Chīguo le.	I’ve had it.
Chīfàn le méiyou?	Hái méi chī fàn ne.	I haven’t eaten my meal yet.
Chīguo fàn le méiyou?	Hái méi chīguo ne.	I haven’t had my meal yet.
Chīfàn le méi?	Hái méi chī ne.	I haven’t eaten yet.
Chīguo fàn le méi?	Hái méi chīguo ne.	I haven’t had it yet.
Chī le méi?	Hái méi ne.	Not yet.
	Méiyǒu.	No.
	Méi.	No.

Summary (showing typical expanded and reduced forms):

<i>Done?</i>	Chīfàn le ma?	Chī le ma?
<i>Done [or not]?</i>	Chīfàn le méiyou?	Chī le méi?
<i>Done.</i>	Chīfàn le.	Chī le.
<i>Not done.</i>	Méiyou chīfàn.	Méi chī.
<i>Done?</i>	Chīguo fàn le ma?	Chīguo le ma?
<i>Done [or not]?</i>	Chīguo fàn le méiyou?	Chīguo le méi?
<i>Done.</i>	Chīguo fàn le.	Chī le.

### Exercise 2.

a) Ask and answer as indicated:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Read the paper?               | Not yet.                        |
| 2. Started work?                 | Yes, I have.                    |
| 3. They’ve gone?                 | No, not yet.                    |
| 4. Was it cold?                  | No, not very.                   |
| 5. Have [they] got off work yet? | Yes, [they] have.               |
| 6. [We]’re not nervous anymore.  | [You] were yesterday.           |
| 7. [I]’ve eaten.                 | Are [you] still hungry?         |
| 8. Bathed?                       | Yes, it was nice [comfortable]. |

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 9. Are they out of class yet? | Not yet.                         |
| 10. Thirsty?                  | Not anymore.                     |
| 11. Hungry?                   | Not anymore, I've eaten.         |
| 12. Has class started?        | Not yet.                         |
| 13. Nervous?                  | I am now!                        |
| 14. Young Wang's in bed?      | Yes, he's already in bed.        |
| 15. Are they up?              | Yes, but they haven't eaten yet. |

*b) What would you say? (Use pronouns where needed.)*

1. Ask your friend if she's eaten yet (3 ways).
2. Announce that she's already left work [for the day].
3. Explain that it was cold yesterday, but that it's gotten hot today.
4. Announce that she hasn't gone to class yet.
5. Explain that they've bathed, but they haven't eaten.
6. Explain that you were all unwell yesterday, but today you're fine.
7. Explain that the first's already gone, but the second and third still haven't.
8. Explain that it was warm yesterday, and that it is today as well.

## 1.9 Greeting and taking leave

### 1.9.1 Names and titles

Because even perfunctory greetings tend to involve a name and title, you need to have some rudimentary information about forms of address before being introduced to the language of greeting and leave taking. Below are five common Chinese surnames, followed by a title which means, literally, 'teacher', and the SV hǎo, which in this environment, serves as a simple acknowledgement. Lǎoshī, which has no exact correspondence in English, can be applied to both males and females, as well as to all ranks of teachers, and even other types of white-collar workers.

Zhāng lǎoshī, hǎo.	'Hello, Professor Zhang.'
Wáng lǎoshī, hǎo.	
Lǐ lǎoshī, hǎo.	[with tone shift]
Zhào lǎoshī, hǎo.	
Chén lǎoshī, hǎo.	

### 1.9.2 Hello

Using specialized greetings such as 'hi' or 'bonjour' to acknowledge or confirm the worth of a relationship on every encounter is not a universal feature of cultures. The practice seems to have crept into Chinese relatively recently. Whereas in the past, and even now in the countryside, people might acknowledge your presence by asking where you are going, or if you have eaten (if they say anything at all to a stranger), nowadays urban Chinese often make use of phrases like nǐ hǎo in ways similar to English 'hi' or 'hello'. Most people would probably regard nǐ hǎo as the prototypical neutral greeting, but there are other common options such as the ones listed below:

Nǐ hǎo!		Hi; Hello!
Nín hǎo!	<i>Deferential.</i>	How do you do?
Hei!	<i>Exclamation</i>	Ey! Hi!
Hǎo!		Hi! Hello!
Hǎo ma?		You well?
Nǐ hǎo a!	<i>Informal.</i>	How're you doing?

A version of ‘good morning’, based on the verb zǎo ‘be+early’, has been common usage in Taiwan, and is now becoming more current on the Mainland as well:

Zǎo!	Morning! (be+early)
Zǎo ān.	Good morning. (early peace)
Nǐ zǎo.	
Nín zǎo.	etc.

Expressions comparable to English ‘good afternoon’ or ‘good evening’ are also starting to be used in modern China: thus xiàwǔ ‘afternoon’ and wǎnshàng ‘evening’ are sometimes used in the expressions xiàwǔ hǎo ‘good afternoon’, wǎnshàng hǎo ‘good evening’. Wǎn ān ‘good night (late peace)’, as a sign off at the end of the day, has a longer pedigree, and is now commonly used by staff in larger hotels, for example.

In general, greetings of the sort listed above are used *more sparingly* than their English counterparts. Colleagues or classmates passing each other, for example, are less likely to use a formulaic greeting such as nǐ hǎo – though novelties such as fast food counters and toll booths (where toll collectors can sometimes be heard to greet each passing driver with nǐ hǎo) may encourage broader use. In general, though, a greeting to someone of higher status should be preceded by a name, or name and title (as in §1.9.1).

### 1.9.3 Goodbye

Many cultures have conventional phrases for taking leave. Often blessings serve the purpose (eg ‘bye’, from ‘good bye’, supposedly derived from the phrase ‘God be with you’). Here are some Chinese ‘goodbyes’, beginning with the standard, zàijiàn, literally ‘again-see’.

Zàijiàn.	<i>neutral</i>	Goodbye. (again-see)
Yihuǐr ~ yíhuìr jiàn.	<i>friendly</i>	See [you] soon. (awhile see)
Míngtiān jiàn.	<i>neutral</i>	See [you] tomorrow. (tomorrow see)
Huíjiàn.	<i>informal</i>	See [you] later; bye. (return-see)
Huítou jiàn.	<i>friendly</i>	See [you] shortly. (return-head see)
Màn zǒu.	<i>friendly</i>	Take it easy. (slowly walk)

#### Notes

- a) The addition of final -r to the written pinyin syllable represents a complex of phonetic effects that will be considered more fully later. In the case of yihuǐr ~ yíhuìr, the final -r affects the quality of the preceding vowel, so that it is pronounced [yihuě̃r ~ yíhuè̃r] rather than [yihuǐr ~ yíhuìr].

- b) The alternate pronunciation yíhuìr is often said to be ‘southern’.
- c) Students of all kinds, and other urban youth, often end a series of farewells with English bàibài.
- d) As with greetings, when saying goodbye to an older person, or a person of rank, it is normal to mention name and title first, eg: Wèi lǎoshī, zàijiàn.



Yílù-píng'ān [JKW 1982]

#### 1.9.4 Bon Voyage

This is as good a time as ever to get familiar with a few phrases that are used to wish people well when they leave on a journey, or to greet them when they arrive. The most common expression for ‘bon voyage’, is:

Yílù-píng'ān.

‘Whole-journey peaceful.’

This expression applies to almost any journey, whether by air, ship or bus. Yílù-shùnfēng ‘whole-journey favorable-wind’, has much the same meaning, but is not used for journeys by air. Chinese are superstitious about effect of words, and would deem it ill advised to mention the word fēng ‘wind’ before a flight. Notice that both expressions contain four syllables, a favored configuration in the Chinese lexicon.

In greeting someone returning from a long journey, instead of the question ‘how was the flight/journey/voyage’, Chinese generally utter a variant of an expression that reflects the traditional discomforts of travel:

<Lù shàng> xīnkǔ ba. ‘Tough journey, huh? (<road on> bitter BA)’

An analysis of these expressions is provided above, but at this stage, they should simply be memorized (by repetition) and kept in storage for greeting visitors or seeing people off.

### 1.9.5 Smoothing the transitions

#### a) Prior to asking a question

In more formal situations, questions are often prefaced with the expression qǐngwèn, literally ‘request-ask’, but idiomatically equivalent to ‘may I ask’ or ‘excuse me’.

Qǐngwèn may also be preceded by a name and title.

Qǐngwèn, nǐ chīfàn le ma?	Excuse me, have you eaten?
Zhào lǎoshī, qǐngwèn, nín è bu è?	Prof. Zhao, mind if I ask: are you hungry?

Qǐng ‘request; invite’ also occurs in the common phrase qǐng zuò ‘have a seat (invite sit)’ and the expression, qǐng jìn ‘won’t you come in (invite enter)’.

#### b) Prior to leaving

In the normal course of events, just a goodbye is too abrupt for closing a conversation. One way to smooth the transition is, before saying goodbye, to announce that you have to leave. Here are four ways to do that, all involving the verb zǒu ‘leave; go’. These expressions are complicated to analyze; some notes are provided below, but otherwise, they should be internalized as units.

Hǎo, nà wǒ zǒu le. ‘Okay, I’m off then. (okay, in+that+case, I leave LE)’

Hei, wǒ gāi zǒu le. ‘Say, I should be off. (hey, I should leave LE)’

Hǎo, nà jiù zhèi-yàng ba, zǒu le. ‘Okay then, that’s it, [I]’m off! (okay, in+that+case then this-way BA, leave LE)’

Bù zǎo le, wǒ gāi zǒu le. ‘[It]’s late, I’d better be off. (not be+early LE, I should leave LE)’

#### Notes

Gāi or yīnggāi ‘should; must’; nà ‘in that case; well; then’; jiù ‘then’; ba is a particle associated with suggestions; le [here] signals a new situation. Taking leave obviously involves a broad range of situations, including seeing someone off on a journey (which, in China, is an extremely important event). The four options listed in this section serve well for closing an informal conversation.

## 1.10 Tones

### 1.10.1 Tone combos (the first 6)

Tones are easier to perceive and assimilate in pairs. Four tones form 16 possible combinations of two, but because of the restriction on combinations of low tones (3+3 > 2+3), only 15 pairs are distinctive. The six sets below are mostly made up of words already encountered. They should be memorized so that they can be recited by number: dì-yī: lǎoshī, jǐnzhāng; dì-èr: xǐzǎo, hěn hǎo, etc.

1 lǎoshī	2 xǐzǎo	3 zàijiàn
jǐnzhāng	hěn hǎo	kànbào
4 bú rè	5 hěn máng	6 bù gāo
bú lèi	hěn nán <i>difficult</i>	shàngbān

Tones in combination tend to accommodate each other to some degree, though not to the point of shifting to another tone. In the above sets, the most salient adjustment is probably that of 4+4, (zàijiàn) where the tone of the first syllable is not so steeply falling as that of the last. The first of the two is some times referred to as the ‘modified-4<sup>th</sup>’ tone.

### 1.10.2 Tone lock

In these first weeks of learning Chinese, you may find yourself unable to pronounce a tone, even unable to mimic your teacher – a situation that might be called ‘tone lock’. Tone lock can occur for many reasons, but one common one is that as a beginner, you will often be tentative, and tentativeness in English is accompanied by a rising contour. That’s fine if you are trying to say the name, Wáng, with rising tone. But it won’t work if you want to say Wèi, which is falling. Other strange conditions may occur: you may hear rising as falling, and falling as rising (flip-flop); your falling may refuse to fall (‘fear of falling’), your level, refuse not to fall (‘fear of flying’). Regardless of the symptoms, the best cure is to figuratively step back, and make use of your tone concepts: level is ‘sung out,’ rising is ‘doubtful’ (*Wáng? máng?*), low is ‘low’ (despite the contoured symbol), and falling is ‘final’ or ‘confidant’ (*Wáng, Chén, Wèi*; or ‘I said *Wèi*’).

### 1.10.3 The first ‘rule of 3’

If you find that the tonal cues, ‘sung out’, ‘doubt’, ‘low’ and ‘final’ do not serve you well, there are others that have been used in the past. Walter C. Hillier, in his *English-Chinese Dictionary* of 1953 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.) proposed ‘languid assertion’ for the first tone, ‘startled surprise’ for the second, ‘affectionate remonstrance’ for the third, and ‘abuse’ for the fourth. Whatever the label, the important point is to follow the rule of three: develop a concept for each tone, know what tone the word has, and monitor yourself when you speak.

1. conceptualize the tones (*sung out etc.*);
2. learn the tone with the word (*eg hao has low tone*);
3. monitor your speech.



**Exercise 3.**

a) Read out the following sets – recall your tone concepts:

1	dá	dǎ	dā	dà	bù	bǔ	bú	bù
2	kǒu	kòu	kōu	kòu	jīn	jín	jǐn	jìn
3	pán	pàn	pān	pán	guō	guǒ	guó	guò
4	wèi	wěi	wéi	wēi	hǎi	hái	hāi	hài

b) Tone shifts: Read the following sequences aloud, supplying the tones that are omitted:

1	bu máng	bu è	yì tài	yì tiáo
2	bu lèi	bu shì	yì kuài	dì-yì
3	bu jǐnzhāng	bu kě	yì wèi	yì zhāng
4	bu hǎo	bu cuò	yì běn	yì kè
5	hen hǎo	hen máng	hen zǎo	hen wǎn <sup>late</sup>
6	hen lèi	hen nán	hai hǎo	hen kě

c) Students often feel that the tones that are the most difficult to distinguish are the rising and the low. Here is a discrimination exercise that focuses on those two. In the disyllabic words below, the final syllables all contain either a rising tone or a low. Have a Chinese speaker read them to you twice each (from the characters), then see if you can correctly identify the missing tone in the pinyin versions of the words.

1. 英勇	2. 天才	3. 当年	4. 大米	5. 英语
6. 橡皮	7. 书法	8. 黑板	9. 加强	10. 冰球
11. 号码	12. 重叠	13. 开展	14. 开头	15. 多余
16. 孙女	17. 天然	18. 跳舞	19. 构成	20. 思想
1. yīngyong	2. tiāncái	3. dāngnián	4. dàmi	5. Yīngyu
6. xiàngpi	7. shūfā	8. hēiban	9. jiāqiang	10. bīngqiú
11. hàoma	12. chóngdié	13. kāizhān	14. kāitōu	15. duōyu
16. sūnnǚ	17. tiānrán	18. tiàowu	19. gòucheng	20. sīxiang

d) Select a tone for all, then practice reading out these syllables (across), all of which contain pinyin 'o' as main vowel:

duo    dou    fo    kuo    cou    zhou    zhuo    zou    zuo  
bo    guo    ruo    shou    gou    shuo    suo    po    you

e) Read out the following syllables that contain the -ui or -iu rhymes – these are toned:

guì    shuí    ruì    chuī    zuì    duì    (wèi)  
liú    niú    xiū    qiú    diū    jiǔ    (yǒu)  
guǐ – jiǔ    liù – duì    cuì – qiú    liú – shuí

## 1.11 Summary

### Main patterns

	+	Hěn lèi.
Nǐ lèi ma?	0	Hái hǎo.
	--	Bú tài lèi.
Nǐ máng bu máng?		
Nǐ chīfàn le ma?	+	Chī le.
Nǐ chīfàn le méiyóu?	--	Hái méi ne.
Nǐ chīguo fàn le ma?	+	Chī<guo> le.
Nà, jiù zhèiyàngr ba.		Hǎo, jiù zhèiyàngr!
Zhāng lǎoshī, hǎo.		Wáng Jié, zàijiàn..

### Conversational scenarios

<u>Greetings</u>	<u>Development</u>	<u>Leaving</u>
Nǐ hǎo.	Máng ma?	Hǎo, zàijiàn, míngtiān jiàn.
Wèi lǎoshī, hǎo.	Chīfàn le ma?	Chén lǎoshī, zàijiàn.
	Bú è le.	Míngtiān jiàn.

Tā hái méi xǐzǎo. Duì ma?

Nǐ ne? Yě hěn lèi.    Tā yǐjīng qīlai le méiyóu?

Zuótiān hěn rè ma? Xiànzài ne? Shàng kè le méiyóu?

## 1.12 Rhymes and Rhythms

Rote learning, very highly prized in traditional and even modern China, and highly valued at other times in our own past, is no longer generally considered a beneficial educational method in the West. Outside class, however, people still learn parts for plays, and they often recall song lyrics, advertising jingles and slogans without much self-conscious effort. So we take advantage of these predilections by providing some suitable Chinese rhymed and rhythmic material at the end of each lesson. This material ranges from doggerel to poetry, from jingles to nursery rhymes and from satirical verse to songs and poems. It is selected for easy recall, and eventually it will form a useful repertoire that can be tapped for information about pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical patterns. What is more, you will have something to recite when you are asked to ‘say something in Chinese’ or when you are in China and asked to sing or perform for an audience. And closer to home, you may be asked to atone for being late to class by reciting some short piece in front of your classmates.

The first rhyme – a nursery rhyme - tells the story of a young entrepreneur and his struggle to set up a business. The word-for-word gloss provided will guide you towards the meaning.

### Dà dùzi

Dà dùzi,	big tummy
kāi pùzi,	open shop
méi běnqián,	not+have root-money
dàng kùzi.	pawn trousers

The second, also a nursery rhyme, has a shifting rhythm but a more mundane subject matter: the tadpole, denizen of village ponds and urban drainage systems.

### Xiǎo kēdǒu

Xiǎo kēdǒu,	small tadpole
shuǐ lǐ yóu,	water in swim
xìxì de wěiba,	tiny DE tail
dàdà de tóu.	big DE head

## 第一课 Dì-yī kè

## Lesson 1

名不正则言不顺，言不顺 则事不成

Míng bú zhèng zé yán bú shùn, yán bú shùn zé shì bù chéng.

‘Name not proper then words not effective, words not effective then things won’t succeed.’

On the ‘rectification of names’.

Confucius, *Analects*. *Classical Chinese*.

## 1.1 General features of Chinese texts

- 1.1.1 Size** Regardless of complexity, characters are matched in overall size, fitting into an imaginary rectangle along the lines indicated in the following example (in simplified characters). For this reason, characters are also called fāngkuàizì ‘squared writing’.

上海天气很热 ○ Shànghǎi tiānqì hěn rè.

- 1.1.2 Spacing** Characters are evenly spaced regardless of whether they represent whole words or components of words. Compare the character version of the sentence above and the pinyin version. Though the convention is not always consistently followed, pinyin places spaces between words rather than syllables. Characters are evenly spaced, regardless of word boundaries.

- 1.1.3 Punctuation** Modern Chinese written material makes use of punctuation conventions that are similar in form to those of English, though not always identical in function:

Periods, full stops: traditionally ‘。’, but nowadays also ‘.’

Commas: ‘，’ and ‘、’, the latter for lists (enumeration)

Quotes: traditionally 「 - 」 or 《 》, but nowadays also ‘ ’ and “ ”

Proper names: usually unmarked, though in a few texts, indicated by wavy underline. There is nothing comparable to a capital letter in Chinese.

*Other punctuation will be noted as encountered.*

- 1.1.4 Direction** Traditionally, Chinese has been written downwards, from right column to left. Major writing reforms instituted in the 1950s in the PRC not only formalized a set of simplified characters (see next item), but required them to be written horizontally, from left to right, like modern European languages. As a result, Chinese texts now come in two basic formats. Material originating in Taiwan and traditional overseas communities, or

on the Mainland prior to the reforms, is written with traditional characters that are – with a few exceptions such as in headlines and on forms – arranged vertically (top to bottom and right to left). Material originating in the Mainland, in Singapore (again, with some exceptions for religious or special genres) and in some overseas communities, after the reforms of the 1950s, is written with simplified characters arranged horizontally, left to right.

(Chinese has provided the model for most of the scripts that write vertically – at least in East Asia. Vertical writing is still the norm in Japan, coexisting with horizontal writing. Other scripts of the region, such as Mongolian, whose writing system derives ultimately from an Indian prototype, have also followed the traditional Chinese format.)

## 1.2 The form of characters

Characters are the primary unit for writing Chinese. Just as English letters may have several forms (eg g /g, a/ɑ) and styles (eg *italic*), so Chinese characters also have various realizations. Some styles that developed in early historical periods survive to this day in special functions. Seals, for example, are still often inscribed in the ‘seal script’, first developed during the Qin dynasty (3<sup>rd</sup> C. BCE). Other impressionistic, running scripts, developed by calligraphers, are still used in handwriting and art. Advertisements and shop signs may stretch or contort graphs for their own design purposes. *Manga* style comics animate onomatopoeic characters – characters that represent sound – in idiosyncratic ways. Putting such variants aside, it is estimated that the number of characters appearing in modern texts is about 6-7000 (cf. Hannas 1997, pp 130-33, and particularly table 3). Though it is far fewer than the number cited in the largest historical dictionaries, which include characters from all historical periods, it is still a disturbingly large number.

### 1.2.1 Radicals and phonetics

There are ameliorating factors that make the Chinese writing system more learnable than it might otherwise be. One of the most significant is the fact that characters have elements in common; not just a selection of strokes, but also larger constituents. Between 2/3 and 3/4 of common characters (cf. DeFrancis 1984, p. 110 and *passim*) consist of two elements, both of which can also stand alone as characters in their own right. Historically, these elements are either roots, in which case they are called ‘phonetics’, or classifiers, in which case they are called (paradoxically) ‘radicals’. Thus, 忘 *wàng* ‘forget’ contains 亡 as phonetic and 心 as classifier; 語 *yǔ* ‘language’ has 吾 and 言. The significance of the terms phonetic and classifier will be discussed in a later unit. For now, it is enough to know that the basic graphs are components of a large number of compound graphs: 亡 appears in 忙 and 氓, for example; 心 in 志 and 忠; 言 in 謝 and 說; 吾 in 悟 and 晤. Even this set of component graphs numbers in the high hundreds, but familiarity with them allows many characters to be learned as a pairing of higher order constituents rather than a composite of strokes.

### 1.2.2 Simplified characters

Chinese policy makers have also tried to make the writing system more learnable by introducing the Chinese equivalent of spelling reform, which takes the form of reducing the number of strokes in complicated characters: 國 becomes 国; 邊 becomes 边. The two sets are usually called ‘traditional’ and ‘simplified’ in English, *fántǐzì* (‘complicated-body-characters’) and *jiǎntǐzì* (‘simple-body-characters’) in Chinese.

For almost 2000 years in China, serious genres of writing were written in the *kǎishū* script (‘model writing’) that first appeared in the early centuries of the first millennium. In the 1950s, the Mainland government, seeking to increase literacy, formalized a set of simplified characters to replace many of the more complicated of the traditional forms. Many of these simplified characters were based on calligraphic and other styles in earlier use; but others were novel graphs that followed traditional patterns of character creation.

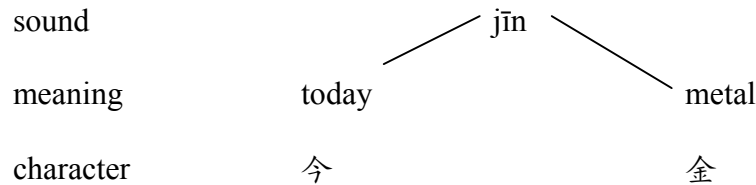
For the learner, this simplification is a mixed blessing – and possibly no blessing at all. For while it ostensibly makes writing characters simpler, it also made them less redundant for reading: 樂 and 東 (used to write the words for ‘music’ and ‘east’, respectively) are quite distinct in the traditional set; but their simplified versions, 乐 and 东, are easy to confuse. Moreover, Chinese communities did not all agree on the new reforms. The simplified set, along with horizontal writing, was officially adopted by the PRC in the late 1950s and (for most purposes) by Singapore in the 1960s. But Taiwan, most overseas Chinese communities and, until its return to the PRC, Hong Kong, retained the traditional set of characters as their standard, along with vertical writing.

*Jiǎntǐzì* and *fántǐzì* should not be thought of as two writing systems, for not only are there many characters with only one form (也 yě, 很 hěn, 好 hǎo, etc), but of those that have two forms, the vast majority exhibit only minor, regular differences, eg: 说/說, 饭/飯. What remain are perhaps 3 dozen relatively common characters with distinctively divergent forms, such as: 这/這, 买/買. Careful inspection reveals that even they often have elements in common. For native Chinese readers, the two systems represent only a minor inconvenience, rather like the difference between capital and small letters in the Roman alphabet, though on a larger scale. Learners generally focus on one system for writing, but soon get used to reading in both.

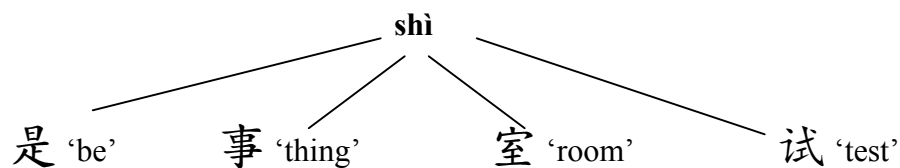
## 1.3 Function

As noted earlier, characters represent not just syllables, but syllables of particular words (whole words or parts of words). In other words, characters generally function as logograms – signs for words. Though they can be adapted to the task of representing syllables (irrespective of meaning), as when they are used to transliterate foreign personal and place names, when they serve this function they are seen as characters with their meanings suppressed (or at least, dimmed), eg: 意大利 Yìdàlì ‘Italy’, with the meanings ‘intention-big-gain’ suppressed.

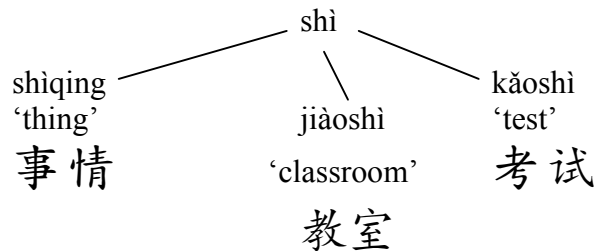
In practice, different words with identical sound (homophones) will usually be written with different characters.



Such homophony is common in Chinese at the syllable level (as the *shi*-story, described in the preliminary chapter, illustrated). Here, for example, are some common words or word parts all pronounced shì (on falling tone):



But except for high-frequency words (such as 是 shì ‘be’), *words* in Mandarin are usually *compound*, consisting of several syllables: 事情 shìqíng ‘things’; 教室 jiàoshì ‘classroom’; 考试 kǎoshì ‘examination’. At the level of the word, homophony is far rarer. In Chinese language word-processing where the input is in *pinyin*, typing shìqíng and kaoshi (most input systems do not require tones) will elicit at most only two or three options, and since most word processors organize options by frequency, in practice, this means that the characters for shìqíng and kaoshi will often be produced on the first try.



## 1.4 Writing

### 1.4.1 Writing in the age of word processors

Just as in English it is possible to read well without being able to spell every word from memory, so in Chinese it is possible to read without being able to write every character from memory. And in fact, with the advent of Chinese word processing, it is even possible to write without being able to produce every character from memory, too; for in a typical word processing program, the two steps in composing a character text are, first, to input *pinyin* and, second, to confirm – by reading – the output character, or if necessary, to select a correct one from a set of homonyms (ordered by frequency).

There is, nevertheless, still a strong case to be made for the beginning student learning to write characters by hand. First of all, there is the aesthetic experience. In the Chinese world, calligraphy – beautiful writing, writing beautifully – is valued not only as art, but also as moral training. Even if your handwriting never reaches gallery quality, the tactile experience and discipline of using a writing implement on paper (or even on a tablet computer) is valuable. Writing also serves a pedagogical function: it forces you to pay attention to details. Characters are often distinguished by no more than a single stroke:

4 strokes	天	夭	夫	犬	太
	tiān	yāo	fū	quǎn	tài
	sky	goblin	person	dog	grand
5 strokes	白	申	田	甲	由
	bái	shēn	tián	jiǎ	yóu
	white	explain	field	‘A’	from

Learning to write characters does not mean learning to write all characters encountered from memory, for the immense amount of time it takes to internalize the graphs inevitably takes away from the learning of vocabulary, usage and grammatical structure. This course adopts the practice of introducing material in pinyin rather exuberantly, then dosing out a subset to be read in characters. The balance of writing to reading is something to be decided by a teacher. In my view, at least in the early lessons, students should not only be able to read character material with confidence, but they should be able to write most of it if not from memory, then with no more than an occasional glance at a model. The goal is to learn the principles of writing so that any character can be reproduced by copying; and to internalize a smaller set that can be written from memory (though not necessarily in the context of an examination). These will provide a core of representative graphs and frequently encountered characters for future calligraphic endeavors.

#### 1.4.2 Principles of drawing characters

Strokes are called bǐhuà(r) in Chinese. Stroke order (bǐshùn) is important for aesthetic reasons – characters often do not look right if the stroke order is not followed. Following correct stroke order also helps learning, for in addition to visual memory for characters, people develop a useful tactile memory for them by following a consistent stroke order.

##### a) Form

There are usually said to be eight basic strokes plus a number of composites. They are shown below, with names for each stroke and examples of characters that contain them.

<u>héng</u> ‘horizontal’	一	<u>shù</u> ‘vertical’	十
<u>piě</u> ‘cast aside’ ie leftwards slanting	人	<u>nà</u> ‘pressing down’ ie rightwards slanting	入



tiǎo ‘poking up’ ie  
rightward rising

冷 把

diǎn ‘dot’

小 熱

gōu ‘hook’  
[four variants, shown]

小 心 弋 买

zhé ‘bend’  
[many variants]

马 凸

Composite strokes can be analyzed in terms of these eight, eg ‘horizontal plus leftwards slant’.

### b) Direction

In most cases, strokes are falling (or horizontal); only one of the eight primary strokes rises – the one called tiǎo.

### c) Order

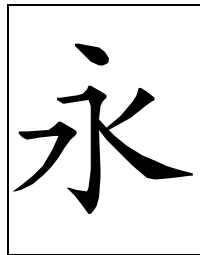
The general rules for the ordering of strokes are given below. These rules are not detailed enough to generate word order for you, but they will help you to make sense of the order, and to recall it more easily once you have encountered it. Begin here by drawing the characters shown below as you contemplate each of the rules, and recite the names of the strokes:

- |  |      |                      |   |
|--|------|----------------------|---|
| i) Horizontal ( <u>héng</u> ) before vertical ( <u>shù</u> ):  | shí  | 10                   | 十 |
| ii) Except a closing <u>héng</u> is often postponed till last:   | wáng | king; <i>surname</i> | 王 |
|  | tǔ   | soil                 | 土 |
| iii) Left stroke before right:   | bā   | 8                    | 八 |
| (eg <u>piě</u> before <u>nà</u> )  | rén  | person               | 人 |
|  | mù   | wood                 | 木 |
| iv) Top before bottom:   | sān  | 3                    | 三 |
|  | yán  | speech               | 言 |
| v) Left constituent before right:  | dì   | place                | 地 |
| (eg 土 before 也)  |      |                      |   |
| vi) Boxes are drawn in 3 strokes:<br>the left vertical, then top and right,<br>ending with bottom (left to right): | kǒu  | mouth                | 口 |

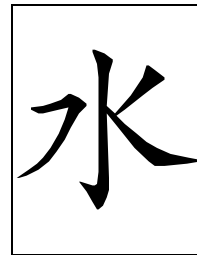
vii) Frame before innards:	yuè	moon; month	月
	guó	country	国
viii) Frames are closed last, after innards:	sì	4	四
	rì	sun; day	日
	tián	field	田
ix) For symmetrical parts, dominant precedes minor:	xiǎo	small	小

**d) Two illustrative characters**

Because of the symmetry of its form as well as the gravity of its meaning, the character that represents the root yǒng, whose basic meaning is ‘everlasting’, is often used as an illustration of the 8 basic strokes. Actually, yǒng is composed of only 5 strokes, but some of the 5 can illustrate several strokes simultaneously. Also cited, on the right, is the more common character for shuǐ, ‘water’, which is similar in form.



yǒng  
eternal



shuǐ  
water

Find out the way these characters are written from a teacher (or from your flashCube links), then see if you can follow the analysis of yǒng into the 8 basic strokes by overlaying each stroke in the following set in red ink:

diǎn   héng   zhé   gōu   tiǎo   piě   piě   nà

永 永 永 永 永 永 永 永

dot	horiz'l bend top mid	hook	rise top left	fall left bottom left, top right	fall right bottom right
-----	-------------------------	------	------------------	--	----------------------------

### 1.5 Presentation of characters

a) Each character is introduced in large format, with number of strokes, pronunciation and a general meaning indicated below it. Since most words are compound in Mandarin, characters generally represent parts of compounds rather than words as such. Sometimes combinational or historical information can suggest a general meaning for a particular character/syllable: 明天 ‘bright + day’ for míngtiān ‘tomorrow’. But in cases where a particular character/syllable has no independent form, it may not be possible to give a reliable meaning: 昨天 ‘? + day’ for zuótiān ‘yesterday’ (cf. ‘yester+day’ in English). In such cases, if a general meaning can be inferred from other combinations, it is given in parentheses.

b) For characters with two forms, a simplified and a traditional, both forms are given, with the traditional form above and the simplified form below.

c) Because of the difficulty of indicating the order of strokes without providing hand-drawn characters, students are asked to seek information on stroke-order from teachers or from internet links.

Some indication of the constituency of characters, as well as the number of strokes needed to draw them, is provided by the two numbers underneath each large format character. The first number is the number of strokes of the radical assigned to the character. The second number gives the strokes that remain in addition to the radical. The sum of the two numbers is the total number of strokes. Where the second number is 0 (eg 长 4+0 / 長 8+0), the character is itself a radical. In some cases, characters that have only one form have been assigned a different radical in the simplified set from that of the traditional; 弟 dì ‘younger brother’, for example, is assigned the radical 弓 in the traditional set (ie 3+4), but 人 (the first two strokes) in the simplified (ie 2+5). In such cases, both numbers are given, with the traditional radical assignment first.

d) Separate reading materials are provided for both traditional and simplified characters. The former would normally be written vertically, but for reasons of practicality, they too are presented in horizontal format.

e) Occasionally, new characters which have not been formally introduced in the character lessons are included in texts on the assumption that they can be identified from the context. Such material is underlined.

f) Writing exercises may be done by hand, or on a word-processor. Teachers may differ on policy about whether to write simplified, traditional or both. One position is to allow learners to choose one or the other, but to require consistency – no switching within a text just to avoid complicated characters! Regardless of writing choice, learners should learn to read both types.

g) Because written language serves different functions from spoken, it is not surprising to find some material specialized for written functions. In Chinese, this includes particular words, grammatical patterns, and most frequently, the use of truncated compounds (eg 已

alone, rather than the full compound, 已經 yǐjīng ‘already’). Such forms will be noted as encountered.

### Approach

In studying the characters, the following approach is recommended:

Scan the **large format** characters and the analysis and **notes** that follow them to prime yourself for the type of material that will follow;

then remind yourself of the words and phrases that contain the new characters by trying to read the section entitled **phrases**, checking your pronunciation against the pinyin that is shown below;

making use of context, do the **readings** until fluent;

finally, do the **exercises**, and practice writing the characters until familiar.

## 1.6 Numbers

一	二	三	四	五
1+0 yī	2+0 èr	1+2 sān	3+2 sì	1+3 wǔ
六	七	八	九	十
2+2 liù	1+1 qī	2+0 bā	1+1 jiǔ	2+0 shí

### Notes

The graphs for 1–3 are obviously representational. The near left-right symmetry of the graphs for 4, 6, 8, and 10 is not entirely coincident. 四 seems to have represented a whole easily divided into two parts; 六’s earlier form looked very like that of 四 (with 六’s two legs matching the two inner strokes of 四). 八 (to be distinguished from 人 rén ‘person’ and 入 rù ‘enter’) is also said to have represented the notion of division (into two fours), and 十 represented a unity of the four directions and the center. Lower multiples of 10 are sometimes represented as unit characters: 廿 ‘20’ and 卅 ‘30’. However, they are still read as if written 二十 and 三十.

**Exercise 1.****a) 九九乘法表 jiǔjiǔ chéngfǎbiǎo ‘9 [x] 9 multiplication-table’**

Read the following multiplications tables aloud. [When the product is only a single digit, the rhythm is preserved by adding 得 dé ‘gets’; for similar reasons, the teens are recited as yīshí’èr, etc. rather than just shí’èr.]

一三 <u>得</u> 三	一五 <u>得</u> 五	一九 <u>得</u> 九
二三 <u>得</u> 六	二五 <u>得</u> 十	二九一十八
三三 <u>得</u> 九	三五一十五	三九二十七
四三一十二	四五二十	四九三十六
五三一十五	五五二十五	五九四十五
六三一十八	六五三十	六九五十四
七三二十一	七五三十五	七九六十三
八三二十四	八五四十	八九七十二
九三二十七	九五四十五	九九八十一

**b) Telephone numbers:**

Although on business cards, telephone numbers are often written out in Arabic numerals, in other contexts they appear as characters, with the exception of líng ‘zero’, which is more often written ‘0’. Practice reading the following until you can do so fluently, with a good rhythm. Recall that in the Mainland, ‘one’ in telephone numbers (as well as other kinds of listings) is usually pronounced yāo rather than yī.

电话 / 電話 diànhuà ‘telephone’

手机 / 手機 shǒujī ‘mobile’

1. 六五九六 二九一八	一三五 0 一七五 一四四三
2 四二七九 九四一五	一三九 三六二九 六九六四
3 五四二七 九四一五	一三九 二0三八 五八八二
4 五一六八 七二一九	一三0 二四六七 九九八五
5 八二二0 七四二六	一三五 一四四三 六四八八
6 二三八七 二七六二	0二九 二六六三 四一0九

## 1.7 Dates

In unit 1, you learned the components of dates: nián ‘year’, yuè ‘month’ and hào ‘day’. It was also noted that dates, though spoken with hào, are usually *written* with rì ‘sun; day’.

年 月 日 (號/号)

1+5	4+0	4+0	3+2
nián	yuè	rì	hào
year	month	day	date

### Notes

The characters used for yuè and rì are representational, being squared off versions of what were originally drawings of the moon and sun. Nián, on the other hand, is not obviously representational, so you might need to construct a nonsense etymology, such as: ‘A year contains four seasons; the first stroke (piě) stands for the winter, the three horizontal strokes (héng) are the growing and harvesting seasons (spring, summer and autumn); the short fourth stroke (nà) marks the harvest, and the vertical (shù) representing the continuity of the year – beginning with spring.’ However, note that the short nà stroke on the 3<sup>rd</sup> horizontal is drawn before the lowest horizontal, presumably following the stroke order principle of closing stroke last.

Dates are frequently written using Arabic numerals, as in these examples, which could be taken from the banners of Mainland newspapers:

1999 年 7 月 26 日  
2002 年 2 月 11 日  
1998 年 5 月 7 日

Interestingly, it is often the traditional, ‘lunar calendar’ dates that are written out in full, with the numbers also represented in Chinese characters. The Chinese lunar calendar consists of 12 months of 29 to 30 days, plus intercalary months inserted every few years to make up the difference. The lunar new year begins some weeks after the solar one. Lunar years are counted in cycles of 60, which exhausts all combinations of a set of 10 ‘stems’ and 12 ‘branches’ (ie 1-1, 1-2 ... 1-11, 1-12, 2-1 ... 10-12, for a total of 60). Though the first lunar month has a special name, the rest are all written with yuè; rì is usually left out of lunar dates. The correspondence is as follows:

International dating:	1999 年 7 月 26 日
Traditional Chinese:	己卯 年七月二十六
	jǐ-mǎo

Most newspaper banners give dates in both forms. But even in traditional dates, zero líng is usually written as 〇 rather than with its complicated character, 零.

### Exercise 2.

a) The following are all significant dates in Chinese history. Practice reading them aloud, and see if you can find out (or recall) the event that took place on each date.

一九四九年 十月 一日

一九二一年 七月 一日

一九一九年 五月 四日

一九八九年 六月 四日

一九四五年 八月 十五日

一九一一年 十月 十日

b) Now, in the spaces provided, write the following dates in Chinese:

November 23, 1949

April 18, 2003

February 15, 1994

October 19, 2001

## 1.8 Days

今天

2+2    3+1  
jīntiān  
today

昨天

4+5  
zuótiān  
yesterday

明天

4+4  
míngtiān  
tomorrow

### Notes

a) It is useful to distinguish simplex characters from compound. The latter contain parts that can themselves be simplex characters: for example, 明 míng ‘bright’ is composed of the two graphs 日 rì ‘sun’ (or ‘day’) and 月 yuè ‘moon’ (or ‘month’). While more common characters are often simplex, the vast majority

are compound. The form of simplex graphs can often be said to be representational and thereby rationalized by non-linguistic reference (eg 日 originated as a representation of the sun, 月 yùè, of the moon). Graphic elements are compounded, however, not to form new representations, but typically, to combine linguistic elements of sound and meaning (cf. Units 2 and 3).

b) 天 tiān has the root meaning of ‘sky; day’, and it is said to be based on a drawing that represented the sky above the earth. 明 míng, [apparently] composed of the characters for ‘sun’ and ‘moon’, appears in compounds with the meaning ‘bright’, so think of ‘a bright tomorrow’. 今 jīn- and 昨 zuó- are both compound, the latter combining the semantic 日 rì ‘sun’ with the phonetic 乍 zhà.

### Exercise 3.

The list of days and dates below [which could be from diary entries] is out of order. Read the entries in numerical order, beginning with the numbers on the left. Though you would normally read the day out as rì, once you have read it, you can pass it on as information with hào: “Dì-yī, míngtiān wǔyuè shí rì (ie shí hào).”

七:	今天	四月	二十日
三:	昨天	九月	十八日
六:	明天	三月	四日
二:	昨天	十二月	十七日
九:	今天	八月	二日
一:	明天	五月	十日
四:	今天	九月	二十五日
五:	明天	十一月	三十日
八:	昨天	六月	十四日
十:	今天	二月	九日

## 1.9 Surnames and pronouns

王 李 毛 周 白 林

4+0	4+3	4+0	2+6	5+0	4+4
Wáng	Lǐ	Máo	Zhōu	Bái	Lín
<i>king</i>	<i>plum</i>	<i>fine hair</i>	<i>circle</i>	<i>white</i>	<i>woods</i>

The characters used for these six surnames also represent words whose meanings (written in italics above) are only very tangentially related to their surname functions.



姓

3+5  
xìng  
surname<d>

她

3+3  
tā  
she; her

他

2+3  
tā  
he; him

也

1+2  
yě  
also; too

*Notes*

姓 xìng ‘surname<d>’ and 她 tā ‘she; her’ both have 女 (which is used to write nǚ ‘female’) as ‘radical’. (Early forms of 女 are said to depict a woman crouching or kneeling.) In 姓, 女 is combined with 生 shēng ‘be born’, suggesting a notion such as ‘children are born of woman and given a surname’. 她 was created in relatively recent times as a counterpart to 他 (a contrast not represented in the spoken language). The right element of 他 and 她 was originally distinct from the graph, 也, used to write the word yě ‘too; also’; the modern identity is fortuitous, probably a result of scribal confusion. Now it causes confusion for modern students of the language.

**1.9.1 Read aloud, beginning with 1 (and citing the number):**

三	她姓毛。	七	他也姓周。
五	他姓李。	二	她姓王。
一	她姓白。	十	她也姓白。
八	他也姓林。	四	她姓林。
九	她也姓毛。	六	他姓周。

**Exercise 4.**

a) The following list is out of numerical order. Read it in order, and following the information given, read out the surname and the birthday (shēngrì), along the following lines:

“Dì-yī ge: <Tā> xìng Wáng; <shēngrì ne:> yījiǔbā’èr nián, yíyuè sì rì”

六：	王；1946 年 8 月 23 日
八：	李；1981 年 6 月 8 日
三：	毛；1979 年 10 月 29 日

九：	周；1966年2月30日
十：	白；1961年10月2日
十一：	林；1942年8月17日
二：	毛；1983年4月14日
一：	王；1982年1月4日
十二：	周；1976年11月21日
四：	白；1959年9月21日
七：	林；1967年3月16日
五：	李；1951年11月7日

b) The table can also provide data for a conversation along the following lines:

Cue: Dì-yī ge ne?

Response: Dì-yī ge: Xīng Wáng; shēng rì: yī-jiǔ-bā-èr nián, yíyuè sì hào.

### 1.10 More pronouns and function words

我 你 們 不 嗎 呢

4+3 ~ 1+6

2+5

2+8

1+3

3+9~10

3+5

们

吗

wǒ  
I; me

nǐ  
you

2+3

men

COLLECTIVE

bu

NEG

3+3

ma

Q

ne

NE

#### Notes

a) 我, 你, and 们/們, like the other graphs used for pronouns (他 and 她) are compound, though only one of the parts of 我 can still be represented independently in the modern language; 我's right hand element is the graph 戈 gē 'spear' (looking more like a harpoon with its barbed tip down). Both 你 and 们/們 have a left hand element that is a vertical version of the graph 人 'person', known as rénzìpáng 'person at the side' (or 'the person radical'). Their right hand elements, 尔 and 门/門, also appear independently (cf. next item).

- b) 门/門, originally a representation of a door with two leaves, is a radical in some characters (eg traditional 開 ‘start; open’) and a phonetic in others, including 们/們 mén and 问/問 wèn ‘ask’ (cf. qǐngwèn ‘excuse me’).
- c) The graph 不 is said to derive from a drawing of a bird that originally served to represent another word. It was borrowed to write bù not because of its form, but because of similarity of sound (just as ‘4’ could be used for its sound to write ‘4get’ in ‘rebus’ writing).
- d) Set §1.9 is the first to include graphs that have both a simplified and traditional forms: 们/們 and 吗/嗎. The simplified graphs are both based on traditional calligraphic forms, and they retain an holistic resemblance to the traditional form even though the two share only a few strokes in common.
- e) 吗/嗎 underwent a similar process to 不. The graph 马/馬 mǎ ‘horse’, was ‘borrowed’ for its sound to represent the toneless question particle (ma), but (unlike the case of 不) the new function was explicitly signaled by the addition of the graph 口 (kǒu ‘mouth; entrance’, but here suggesting ‘colloquial’) to form the compound character 吗/嗎. Cf. 妈/媽 mā, the informal word for ‘mother’, also making use of 马/馬, marked for its new meaning by the addition of the graph 女 ‘woman; female’. 馬 is written with 9 strokes by some, 10 by others.

### 1.10.1 Reading

1. 他姓王。我也姓王。
2. 你也姓毛吗？ / 不，我姓王。
3. 他姓李吗？ / 不，他姓林。
4. 我姓王，他姓林，你呢？
5. 我姓周，他姓林，你姓王。
6. 我姓王，她姓白，你呢？
7. 我姓周，她姓林，你姓白吗？
8. 不，我姓林，你姓白吗？
9. 你们呢？他们呢？ / 我姓周，他们呢：他姓白，他姓李，她姓林。

### 1.11 SVs and associated function words

好 累 忙 冷 很

3+3  
hǎo  
be good

6+5  
lèi  
tired

3+3  
máng  
busy

2+5  
lěng  
cold

3+6  
hěn  
very

還 餓 熱 了 太

3+13

8+7

4+11

1+1

3+1

还 饿 热

3+4

3+7

4+6

hái  
stillè  
hungryrè  
hotle  
LEtài  
too; very  
(grand)

## Notes

a) SVs: 好 is composed of the female-radical, 女, and 子 zǐ ‘child’ (the latter without phonetic function); often explained as the paradigm of a ‘good relationship’. 累 shows 田 ‘field’ above and the radical derived from the graph used for ‘silk’ below: ‘a heavy and *tiring* burden for such as slender base’. 忙, with heart radical (a compressed and truncated version of 心) and 亡 wáng as a phonetic element, can be compared to 忘 wàng ‘forget’ with the same elements configured vertically. 饿/餓 is composed of the food radical and the element 我 wǒ, chosen for its sound value. 冷, has two strokes (diǎn and tiáo) on the left forming the so-called ‘ice radical’, found in a few graphs such as 冰 bīng ‘ice’. The right hand element of 冷 is 令 lìng, a ‘phonetic element’ also found in 零 líng ‘zero’. The four strokes at the base of 热/熱 rè are a form of the ‘fire-radical’ which, in its independent form, is written 火.

b) ADVs: The graph 很 hěn ‘very’ is composed of 彳 as radical and 艮 gèn as phonetic (cf. 恨 hèn, 狠 hěn, 跟 gēn). 太 tài ‘great’ is 大 dà ‘big’ with the extra dot. The graph 还/還 is also used for the word huán ‘to give back’, which is probably the meaning that inspired the traditional graph. The simplified version substitutes 不 not for its sound or meaning, but for its general shape which serves to represent the complicated right-hand element. (Cf. 环/环 huán ‘a ring; surround’.)

c) 了 should be distinguished from 子 zǐ. In the traditional set, the radical assigned to 了 is the second stroke, the vertical hook; but in the simplified set, it is the first stroke, whose uncontorted form is 乙, a radical also assigned to 也.

**1.11.1 Covering the pinyin, check your pronunciation of the following phrases:****a) Jiǎntǐzì ‘simplified set’**

三月	今天	也好	姓王	昨天	我们
sānyuè	jīntiān	yě hǎo	xìng Wáng	zuótiān	wǒmen
很累	不饿	不好	明天	还好	姓毛
hěn lèi	bú è	bù hǎo	míngtiān	hái hǎo	xìng Máo
你们	九月	二十日	姓林	明年	她们
nǐmen	jiǔyuè	èrshí rì	xìng Lín	míngnián	tāmen
你呢	他们	八月	很忙	不太累	冷吗
nǐ ne	tāmen	bāyuè	hěn máng	bú tài lèi	lěng ma
不冷	很热	九十	不饿了	好不好	冷了
bù lěng	hěn rè	jiǔshí	bú è le	hǎo bu hǎo	lěng le

**b) Fántǐzì (including graphs that have only one form)**

他們	很熱	不冷了	很餓	明年	我們
tāmen	hěn rè	bù lěng le	hěn è	míngnián	wǒmen
不熱了	餓不餓	姓周	你們	冷嗎	太好
bù rè le	è bu è	xìng Zhōu	nǐmen	lěng ma	tài hǎo

**1.11.2 Reading**

甲

乙

- 1。 今天很忙也很累。  
昨天还好，不太忙，也不太累。

昨天呢？

- |    |                       |                              |
|----|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2。 | 你们饿不饿？<br>我呢，我很饿。     | 不饿，还好！你呢？                    |
| 3。 | 今天很热！                 | 昨天也很热！                       |
| 4。 | 今天冷了。<br>昨天不太冷，还好。    | 昨天呢？                         |
| 5。 | 我们很热。<br>Ng, 我们也很累。   | 我也很热！很热也很累！                  |
| 6。 | 饿吗？<br>不累，还好。<br>不饿了。 | 不太饿。我很累。你呢？<br>饿不饿？<br>我也不饿。 |

## 1.12 Action verbs and associated function words

吃	飯	已經	課	班
3+3	8+4	3+0	6+7	7+8
	饭	经	课	
chī	3+4	3+5	2+8	bān
eat	fàn	yǐjīng	kè	(a shift; class)
	rice; food; meals	already	class; lesson	
上	下	沒/没	有	
1+2	1+2	3+4	1+5	
shàng	xià	méi	yǒu	
on; upper; go up	under; lower; go down	[not]	have	

- a) 吃 is a compound of 口 kǒu ‘mouth’ and the element 乞, pronounced qǐ on its own. It suggests ‘mouth, teeth and tongue’. 饭/飯 is a compound of the food radical (whose independent form is 食) and phonetic 反 fǎn. Hint: ‘customer on the left with a cap on, with FOOD on the right behind a sneeze shield’. 课/課 contains the speech radical (言 in its independent form) and 果 guǒ (meaning ‘fruit’) as an imperfect phonetic element. Hint: ‘board on an easel in a *classroom*’.
- b) Contrast 己 yǐ with 已 jǐ, 巳 sì, and 乙 yǐ.
- c) The right hand side of the traditional graph, 經, is said to derive from the drawing of a loom used to represent the root meaning of jīng, ie ‘warp [of a loom]’. From the movements and result of weaving, the word derives meanings such as ‘pass through’ or ‘regulate’ as well as ‘classic texts’ [cf. English ‘text’ and ‘textile’]. The etymological meaning of the compound 已经 is harder to see, but probably derives from a notion of ‘completing the task’.
- d) 没 (whose traditional form, 沒, is only slightly different) has a version of the water radical on the left (three strokes in contrast to the two of 冷) and an element pronounce shū on the right (with 4 strokes). The graph is also used for the word mò ‘submerge’, which probably explains the presence of the water radical.

### 1.12.1 Phrases

#### a) Jiǎntǐzì ‘simplified set’

吃饭	吃了	还没	没有	你呢
chīfàn	chī le	hái méi	méiyǒu	nǐ ne
上课	已经	走了	下班	饭很好
shàngkè	yǐjīng	zǒu le	xiàbān	fàn hěn hǎo
没有了	上课	没课	明天	很累
méiyǒu le	shàngkè	méi kè	míngtiān	hěn lèi
上班	还没吃呢	已经吃了	走了没有	还没
shàngbān	hái méi chī ne	yǐjīng chī le	zǒu le méiyǒu	hái méi

## b) Fántǐzì 'traditional set':

熱了	上課	還好	吃飯	已經走了
rè le	shàngkè	hái hǎo	chīfàn	yǐjīng zǒu le
明天沒課	不太餓	你們	不餓了	下課了
míngtiān méi kè	bú tài è	nǐmen	bú è le	xiàkè le

## 1.12.2 Reading

## a) Jiǎntǐzì

甲

- 1。 吃了嗎？  
還沒，我不餓。

- 2。 吃了沒有？  
沒有，我不餓。

- 3。 你吃飯了嗎？  
我已經吃了。

- 4。 今天好不好？  
吃飯了嗎？  
我也已經吃了。

- 5。 他們走了沒有？  
哦，上課了。

- 6。 他吃了沒有？  
他不餓嗎？

- 7。 他們已經上課了嗎？  
哦，沒吃飯呢。

- 8。 明天有沒有課？  
二號呢？

乙

- 吃了。你呢？

- 還沒，你呢。  
我也不餓，今天太熱了。

- 還沒。你呢？

- 還好。  
吃飯了。你呢？

- 已經走了，上課了。

- 沒有，太忙了。  
不餓，還好。

- 還沒，他們還沒有吃飯呢。  
沒有。

- 沒有，明天十月一號。一號  
沒課。  
二號有，三號也有。



## b) Fántǐzì

甲：我今天很累！

乙：吃飯了嗎？

還沒呢，太忙了。

餓嗎？

很餓。你呢？

我不餓，已經吃了。

李白呢，他已經上課了嗎？

他今天很忙，沒有上課。

你熱嗎？

熱！？我不熱，昨天很熱  
今天好了。

昨天很熱，今天也很熱。

今天還好，不熱。

## Exercise 5. Fill in the blanks:

- 1。 我\_\_\_ 没吃饭呢，你呢？ / 我\_\_\_ 经吃了。
- 2。 今天很好，不\_\_\_ 也不冷。 / \_\_\_ 天也很好。
- 3。 昨天不\_\_\_ 冷，还好。 / 昨天很好，可是今天热\_\_\_。
- 4。 我姓林，她\_\_\_ 姓林。 / 是吗？你们姓林？我也\_\_\_ 林。
- 5。 我昨天很忙，今天也很\_\_\_。 / 明天\_\_\_？
- 6。 吃\_\_\_ 了没有？ / 吃\_\_\_。

## Notes

可是 kěshì 'but'

是 shì 'be the case'

### 1.13 On the streets

This section appears regularly in the lessons to introduce you to words and phrases commonly seen on signs, notices, shop fronts and billboards across China (as well as in Chinese communities across the world). Though notes and annotations are still provided for them, the focus is on recognizing the combinations rather than writing them.

入口

rùkǒu  
enter opening  
entrance

出口

chūkǒu  
exit opening  
exit

雨水

yǔshuǐ  
rainwater  
[on manhole covers]

有限公司

yǒuxiàn gōngsī  
have-limit company  
CO.LTD.

銀行

銀行

yínháng  
silver-shop  
bank

#### Notes



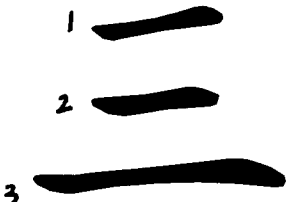
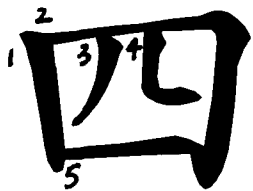

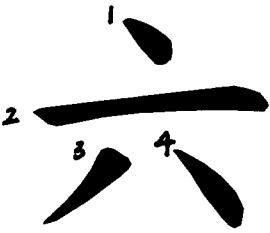
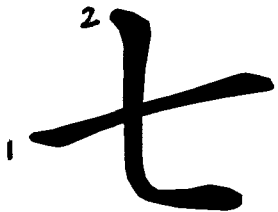
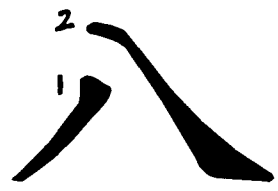

- a) Left leaning 入 has, in earlier notes been contrasted with right leaning 人 rén, as well as with balanced 入 bā
- b) 限 and 銀/银 are part of a phonetic set based on 艮 that includes 很 hěn ‘very’
- c) 行 writes two (historically related) words: háng, with a number of meanings including ‘shop; firm’ and ‘row’; and xíng ‘to go; do; be okay’ (as in 還行).



**Don't!** [JKW 2002]

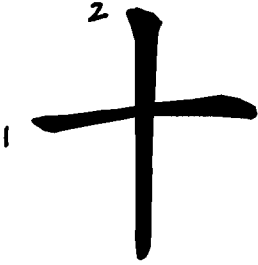











## Stroke Order of Characters in Lesson 1

The number before each stroke indicates where the stroke starts as well as the stroke order.

		
yī/yí/yì	èr	sān
		
sì	wǔ	liù
		
qī	bā	jiǔ

## MIT 中文 I

## Lesson 1

		
shí	nián	yuè
		
rì	hào (T)	hào (S)
		
míng	zuó	jīn
		
tiān	Wáng	Lǐ




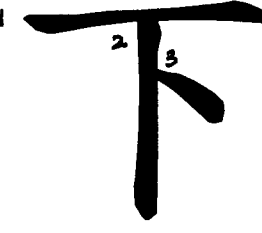





		
Máo	Zhōu	Bái
		
Lín	xìng	tā
		
tā	yě	wǒ
		
nǐ	men (T)	men (S)

		
bú/bù	ma (T)	ma (S)
		
ne	hǎo	lèi
		
máng	lěng	hěn
		
hái (T)	hái (S)	le

		
è (T)	è (S)	tài
		
rè (T)	rè (S)	chī
		
fàn (T)	fàn (S)	yǐ
		
jīng (T)	jīng (S)	bān

## MIT 中文 I

## Lesson 1

		
kè (T)	kè (S)	shàng
		
xià	méi (T)	méi (S)
		
yǒu	yǒng	shuǐ



## Unit 2

Yù bù zhuó, bù chéng qì.  
jade not carve, not become implement

A saying, in classical style, conveying the importance of discipline and perseverance in achieving success. The root meaning of qì (器) is a ‘vessel’, ie something that can be put to use. Its extended meanings include ‘utensils’, and ‘talent’.

### Contents

2.1	Pronunciation	
2.2	Adverbs	
2.3	More SVs	<i>Exercise 1</i>
2.4	Nouns and modification	<i>Exercise 2</i>
2.5	Identity	<i>Exercise 3</i>
2.6	Names and titles	<i>Exercise 4</i>
2.7	Location and existence	<i>Exercise 5</i>
2.8	Miscellany	
2.9	Dialogue: at the airport	<i>Exercise 6</i>
2.10	Reflections: What have you learned?	
2.11	Pinyin notes and practice	<i>Exercise 7</i>
2.12	Summary	
2.13	Rhymes and rhythms	

### 2.1 Pronunciation

As before, to set the articulatory positions of your mouth and tongue for Chinese speech, contrast the following sets of Chinese and English words:

a)	lèi	lay	b)	lái	lie	c)	chū	chew
	méi	May		shāi	shy		shū	shoo
	zhèi	Jay		mài	my		shén	shun
	bēi	bay		pái	pie		zhuō	jaw
	péi	pay		bái	buy		zhōu	Joe
	fēi	Fay					shòu	show
d)	dízi	deeds	xízi	seeds				
	tóuzi	toads	qíci	cheats				
	luózi	lords	bǐci	beets (or beats)				

### 2.2 Adverbs

In the first unit, you were introduced to a number of words that are classed ‘adverbs’: hěn, bù, yě, hái or háishi and yǐjīng. It is difficult to characterize the general function of adverbs beyond rather abstract notions like ‘degree’, ‘amount’, or ‘manner’; but they can be defined positionally as words that are placed before, and are semantically linked to, a following verb (or other adverb).

### 2.2.1 *Tài with le*

Tài, seen only in negative sentences in the first unit (bú tài lèi), is also common in positive sentences, where it is frequently found with a final le: Tài hǎo le. ‘Great!’; Tài jǐnzhāng le. ‘[I]’m real anxious!’; Tài nán le. ‘[It]’s too difficult!’ Le in this context conveys a sense of excess (cf. English ‘exceedingly’), and as such, can be regarded as a special case of the notion of ‘new situation’. Notice that negative sentences with tài often suggest moderation rather than excess, so do not attract final le in the same way: bú tài hǎo.

### 2.2.2 *Other adverbs*

Below are examples of some additional common adverbs: dōu ‘all’, gèng ‘even more’, bǐjiào (pronounced bǐjiào by some) ‘rather; quite; fairly’, and zǒngshì ‘always’.

dōu ‘all’	Tāmen dōu hěn è. Dōu duì. Dōu méi chī ne.	[They]’re all hungry. [They]’re all right. None [of them] has eaten [yet].
gèng ‘even more’	Xiànzài hěn lěng, kěshi yǐqián gèng lěng.	[It]’s cold now, but [it] was even colder before.
bǐjiào ‘quite’	Wǒ jīntiān bǐjiào máng. Zuótiān bǐjiào rè.	I’m fairly busy today. Yesterday was fairly warm.
zǒngshì ‘always’	Xuéshēng zǒngshì hěn máng hěn lèi; dànsī lǎoshī gèng máng gèng lèi.	Students are always busy and tired, but teachers are even more so.

### 2.2.3 *Intensifying or backing off*

#### a) *Fēicháng* ‘very; especially; unusually’

Rather than answering a *yes-no question* about a state with a neutral positive response (Nǐ lèi ma? / Hěn lèi.), you may want to intensify your answer. Fēicháng, an adverb whose literal meaning is ‘not-often’, is one of a number of options:

Jīntiān fēicháng rè!	[It]’s really hot today!
Fēicháng hǎo!	[It]’s unusually good!

#### b) *ADVs tǐng and mǎn ~ mǎn as intensifiers*

Some mention needs to be made here of two adverbs that are very common in certain phrases in colloquial speech. One is tǐng, whose core meaning is actually ‘straight; erect’, but which, as an ADV, carries the force of English ‘very’ or ‘really’. The other is mǎn, which has a variant in low tone, mǎn. The variants may reflect confusion between two different roots, one, mǎn, with a core meaning of ‘fierce’ and an adverbial meaning of ‘entirely; utterly’; and the other mǎn, with a core meaning of ‘full’, extended to ‘very; full’ in the adverbial position. The distinction may have been obscured in part by the fact that the two merge to mǎn when the low-tone rule applies in common phrases such as

mán hǎo. For whatever reason, they seem to be treated as synonymous in colloquial speech by many speakers.

Exclamations with mǎn or tǐng often occur with a final de (written with the same character as possessive de, 的, and sometimes referred to as *situational-de*):

Tǐng hǎo de.	Perfect; great!
Mán hǎo de.	[That]’s great!

Here are some common collocations, roughly glossed to convey the tone of the Chinese; mán is given in rising tone, but you may find that speakers from Taiwan and parts of southern China tend to say mǎn in contexts where the low tone is permitted.

Tǐng bú cuò de.	Not bad!
Tǐng shūfu.	[It]’s quite comfortable.
Tǐng yǒu yìsi de!	How interesting!
Mán hǎochī de!	[It]’s delicious!
Mán piàoliang.	[She]’s real attractive.
Mán bú cuò de!	[That]’s pretty darn good!
Mán bú zàihu.	[He] doesn’t give a damn. (‘to care; be concerned’)

c) *-jīle* ‘extremely’

Another option is the intensifying suffix -jīle, which follows SVs directly (and is therefore not an adverb). Jīle is a compound of jí ‘the extreme point’ or ‘axis’ (cf. Běijí ‘North Pole’), plus le. It is quite productive and can follow almost any SV to mean ‘extremely SV’.

Hǎo jíle!	Excellent!
Tiānqì rè jíle!	The weather’s extremely hot!

d) *Yǒu <yì>diǎnr* ‘kind of; a bit’

Rather than intensifying your answer, you may want to back off and answer ‘kind of; rather; a bit’. The construction is yǒu <yì>diǎnr + SV ‘(have a-bit SV)’, a phrase that appears in the adverbial slot and can be interpreted as a complex adverb. The yì of <yì>diǎnr is often elided (hence the < >). Taiwan and other southern Mandarin regions, where the final ‘r’ is not usual, say yǒu yìdiǎn SV, without the -r. Like the English ‘a bit’, this construction conveys some sort of inadequacy. So tā yǒu yìdiǎnr gāo ‘he’s a bit tall’ suggests that his height is problematical. [Note the presence of yǒu ‘have’ in the Chinese, with no direct correspondence in the English equivalent!]

Wǒ jīntiān yǒu (yì)diǎnr máng.	I’m kind of busy today.
Jīntiān yǒu (yì)diǎnr rè.	It’s rather hot today.
Wǒmen yǒu (yì)diǎnr è.	We’re a bit hungry

*Summary of Adverbs (and other expressions of degree)*

<i>ADV</i>	<i>~Eng equivalent</i>	<i>with SVs</i>	<i>with V<sub>act</sub></i>
bù	not	bú lèi	bú shàngbān
yě	too; also	yě hěn lèi	yě chī le
hái ~ háishi	still	hái hǎo háishi hěn lèi	hái méi zǒu ne
dōu	all	dōu hěn gāo	dōu shuìjiào le
yǐjīng	already		yǐjīng zǒu le
tài	very; too	tài máng le; bú tài máng	
hěn	very	hěn lèi	
tǐng, mǎn ~ mǎn	very; really	mǎn bú cuò	
gèng	even more	gèng rè	
bǐjiào ~ bǐjiào	rather; relatively	bǐjiào lěng	
zǒngshì	always	zǒngshì hěn máng	
fēicháng	extremely; very	fēicháng lěng	

<i>SPECIAL CONSTRUCTIONS</i>	<i>~Eng equivalent</i>	<i>with SVs</i>	<i>with V<sub>act</sub></i>
jíle	‘very; extremely’	hǎo jíle	
yǒu<yì> diǎn<r>	‘kind of; rather; a bit’	yǒu diǎnr guì	

**2.2.4 Conjunctions**

Conjunctions are words that conjoin linguistic units, either as equal partners, as in the case of ‘and’ or ‘but’ (called ‘coordinating conjunctions’), or in a skewed partnership, as in the case of ‘if’ and ‘because’ (called ‘subordinating conjunctions’). In Chinese, there is no word quite comparable to English ‘and’ that connects sentences; that function is often served by the adverb, yě:

Zuótiān wǒ bù shūfu, jīntiān yě bú tài hǎo. I wasn’t very well yesterday,  
and [I]’m not too well today,  
either.

Zuótiān hěn rè, jīntiān yě hěn rè. It was hot yesterday, and it’s  
hot today, too.

As noted in §1.7.5, conjunctions kěshì and dànshì (the latter probably more common in non-northern regions) correspond to English ‘but’ or ‘however’. A third word, búguò, can also be mentioned here; though its range of meaning is broader than that of the other two, it has considerable overlap with them and can also often be translated as ‘but; however’.

Tāmen hái méi chīfàn, kěshì dōu bú è.	They haven't eaten, but they aren't hungry.
Wǒ chīfàn le, dànshi hái méi xǐzǎo.	I've eaten, but I haven't bathed yet.
Tā zǒu le, búguò jīntiān bú shàngbān.	She's left, but she's not going to work today.
<i>cf.</i> Tā zǒu le, búguò jīntiān méi shàngbān.	She's gone, but she didn't go to work today.

### 2.3 More SVs

Here are some additional SVs that can be incorporated in the patterns introduced in the first two units.

#### *Of people*

yán 'strict'                      lihai 'formidable; tough'

#### *Of tasks*

nán 'difficult'                      róngyì 'easy'

#### *Of things*

hǎochī 'nice [to eat]'                      hǎotīng 'nice [sounding]'                      guì 'expensive'

#### *Of people or things*

qīngchū 'clear'                      hǎokàn 'nice [looking]'                      piàoliang 'pretty'

qíguài 'strange; odd; surprising'

#### *Of situations*

xíng 'be okay; be satisfactory; [it'll] do'

Several of these SVs can be applied to people such as lǎoshī 'teachers' and xuésheng 'students'; others, as noted, are more like to apply to things such as Zhōngwén 'Chinese language' or dōngxi '[physical] things'.

#### 2.3.1 Questions with zěnmeyàng 'how [is it]'

The question word zěnmeyàng (pronounced [zěmeyàng], without the first 'n') is used to ask questions corresponding to 'how is X'. Zěnmeyàng is also used as an informal greeting, rather like English 'how's it going'.

Jīntiān zěnmeyàng?                      How is [it] today?  
Hěn rè.                      [It]'s hot.

Zhōngwén zěnmeyàng?                      How's Chinese [class]?  
Hěn nán! Lǎoshī hěn yán.                      [It]'s difficult. The teacher's strict.

#### 2.3.2 Examples

Lǎoshī zěnmeyàng?                      How's the teacher?  
Hěn lìhài, tā fēicháng yán.                      [She]'s formidable; she's really strict.

Tā zěnmeyàng? <i>Hěn lèi, shuìjiào le.</i>	How is he? <i>[He]’s tired, [he]’s gone to bed.</i>
Tāmen zěnmeyàng? <i>Bù shūfu, méi shàngkè.</i>	How are they doing? <i>[They]’re not well, [they] weren’t in class.</i>
Zhōngwén zěnmeyàng? <i>Bù nán yě bù róngyì.</i>	What’s Chinese like? <i>[It]’s not difficult, nor is [it] easy.</i>
Zěnmeyàng? Hǎochī ma? <i>Hái kěyǐ.</i> Guì bu guì? <i>Bú tài guì, hái xíng.</i>	How is [it]? Good? <i>[It]’s okay.</i> Is [it] expensive? <i>Not too – [it]’s reasonable.</i>
Tiānqì zěnmeyàng? <i>Zuótiān fēicháng lěng,</i> <i>kěshì jīntiān hǎo le.</i>	How’s the weather? <i>Yesterday was very cold, but</i> <i>today’s okay.</i>

### 2.3.3 Juéde ‘feel; think’

Zěnmeyàng may be combined with, or may elicit the verb juéde ‘feel; think’ to form a more specific question about internal states:

Xiànzài nǐ juéde zěnmeyàng?	How do you feel now?
<i>Wǒ juéde bù shūfu.</i>	<i>I’m not feeling well.</i>
<i>Wǒ hěn jǐnzhāng.</i>	<i>I’m nervous.</i>
<i>Wǒ juéde hěn lèi.</i>	<i>I feel quite tired.</i>
<i>Hái xíng.</i>	<i>Okay.</i>

### 2.3.4 Zěnmeyàng as a greeting

Responses to zěnmeyàng as an informal greeting include the following:

Zěnmeyàng?	Hái hǎo.	[I]’m fine.
	Hái xíng.	[I]’m okay. (still alright)
	Hái kěyǐ.	Passable. (still be+possible)
	Bú cuò.	Not bad. (not be+erroneous)
	Māma-hūhū.	So-so.
	Lǎo yàngzi.	The usual. (old way)

#### Notes

- Kěyǐ is a verb meaning ‘may; be acceptable’.
- Cuò is a SV meaning ‘be wrong; be mistaken’.
- Māma-hūhū is a complex SV that is formed by repetition of the parts of the SV mǎhu ‘be casual; careless’.

**Exercise 1.**

Perform a dialogue between the two students, Máo Dàwéi and Lǐ Lìsān, along the following lines:

**Máo Dàwéi**

Hi, Lìsān!

Tired. How about you?

No, I already ate.

It was okay. How're your teachers? Strict?

But Japanese is even harder. They're both hard! ... Well, I must be off.

Okay, see you later.

**Lǐ Lìsān**

Hello, Dàwéi. How're you feeling today?

I'm a bit tired too – I still haven't eaten. How about you – hungry?

Was it good?

Very, they're formidable! Chinese is tough!

Okay, bye, take it easy.

## 2.4 Nouns and modification

This section begins with some additions to your repertoire of inanimate nouns. You will have a chance to practice these in context later in this unit as well as subsequently.

yàoshi	keys	yǎnjìng	glasses (eye-mirror)
shū	books	shūbāo	backpack (book-bundle)
hùzhào	passport	xié	shoes [xiézi in the South]
xíngli	luggage	<yǔ>sǎn	[rain]umbrella
bǐ	pen	bǐjìběn	notebook (pen-note-book)
qiānbǐ	pencil (lead-pen)	shǒujī	cell-phone (hand-machine)
màozi	cap; hat	xìnyòngkǎ	credit card (credit-card)
pínbāo	wallet (leather-pack)	dōngxi	[physical] things
tiānqì	weather (sky-air)	yīfu	clothes
bào<zhi>	newspaper (report-paper)	zìdiǎn	dictionary (character-records)
zìxíngchē	bike (self-go-vehicle)	chēzi	small vehicle; car
dānchē	bike (unit-vehicle)	qìchē	car; automobile

### 2.4.1 Measure-words

Nouns lead to the subject of 'measure-words'. In English, one can distinguish two kinds of nouns: those that can be counted directly, and those that can only be counted in terms of a container or amount.

countable  
[can be counted directly]

book → 2 books  
fish → 1 fish  
pen → 3 pens

non-countable:  
[counted by way of a container, amount, etc.]

wine → 10 bottles of wine  
soup → 4 bowls of soup  
tea → 5 cups of tea

It is true that wine, soup and tea can also be counted directly if the meaning is ‘varieties of’: 10 wines; 4 soups; 5 teas. But otherwise, such nouns need to be measured out. In Chinese (as well as in many other languages in the region, including Thai, Vietnamese and Burmese), all nouns can be considered non-countable, and are counted through the mediation of another noun-like word. [The vocabulary in these examples is only for illustration – it need not be internalized yet.]

shū → sì běn shū  
book 2 spine book  
2 books

jiǔ → shí píng jiǔ  
wine 10 bottles wine  
10 bottles of wine

yú → yì tiáo yú  
fish 1 length fish  
a fish

tāng → sì wǎn tāng  
soup 4 bowls soup  
4 bowls of soup

bǐ → sān zhī bǐ  
pens 3 stub pen  
3 pens

chá → sān bēi chá  
tea 3 cup tea  
3 cups of tea

Often a distinction is made between ‘measures’ and ‘classifiers’. The phrases on the right all involve measures, which serve to portion out a substance that is otherwise not naturally bound; all the examples are, in fact, liquids. Chinese often uses Measures where English would use them, as the examples show. Classifiers, on the other hand, are rare in English, though perhaps ‘block’ is an example, as in ‘block of apartments’. Classifiers serve to classify nouns along various physical dimensions. Tiáo for example is a classifier used typically for sinuous things, such as roads, rivers, and fish:

yì tiáo lù ‘a road’  
sān tiáo hé ‘3 rivers’

liǎng tiáo yú ‘2 fish’  
sì tiáo tuǐ ‘4 legs’

Interestingly, in many cases, the original impetus for a particular classifier has been obscured by cultural change. Items of news, for example, are still classified with tiáo (yì tiáo xīnwén ‘an item of news’) even though news is no longer delivered by way of a sinuous tickertape. The use of tiáo for watches may also be a relic of those days when people carried a fob watch on long, sinuous chains.

Rather than keep the notional distinction between classifiers and measures, both will be referred to as ‘Measure-words’, abbreviated as M’s. Before you encounter M’s in sentences, it will be useful to practice them in phrases. We begin with the default M, gè



(usually untuned). It appears with many personal nouns, including rén ‘person’ and xuésheng ‘student’. Note that when combined with an M, the number ‘two’ (but not a number ending in ‘two’, such as 12 or 22) is expressed as liǎng (‘pair’) rather than èr: liǎng ge ‘two [of them]’. And as that example shows, in context, the noun itself may be omitted.

Recall that the tone of yī ‘one’, level when counting or when clearly designating the number ‘1’, shifts to either falling or rising when yī is in conjunction with a following M. The basic tone of gè is falling (hence yí gè) and even though, as noted, gè is often toneless, it still elicits the shift before ‘losing’ its tone: yí gè.

The following sets can be recited regularly until familiar:

yí ge rén <i>1 person</i>	liǎng ge rén <i>2 people</i>	sān ge rén <i>3 people</i>	wǔ ge rén <i>5 people</i>	shí ge rén. <i>10 people</i>
yí ge xuésheng <i>1 student</i>		liǎng ge xuésheng <i>2 students</i>		sān ge xuésheng <i>3 students</i>
yí ge <i>1 of them</i>	liǎng ge <i>2 of them</i>	dì-yī ge <i>the 1<sup>st</sup> [one]</i>	dì-èr ge <i>the 2<sup>nd</sup> [one]</i>	dì-sān ge <i>the 3<sup>rd</sup> [one]</i>

The particle le following phrases like these (as in the main dialogue below) underscores the relevance of the ‘new situation’: Sì ge rén le. ‘So that’s 4 [people].’

Another particularly useful M is kuài ‘lump; chunk; piece’, which in the context of money (qián), means *yuan*, generally translated as ‘dollar’. The yuán is a unit of the currency known as rénmínbì [MB] ‘people’s currency’.

yí kuài qián	liǎng kuài qián	sān kuài qián	wǔ kuài qián	shí kuài qián
yí kuài	liǎng kuài	sān kuài	wǔ kuài	shí kuài

#### 2.4.2 Possessive pronouns

In English, possessive pronouns have quite a complicated relationship to ordinary pronouns (eg ‘I > my > mine’; ‘she > her > hers’), but in Chinese, they are formed in a perfectly regular fashion by the addition of the ‘possessive marker’, de: wǒ ‘I’ > wǒ de ‘my; mine’. The full system is shown below:

wǒ de	wǒmen de	my; mine	our; ours
nǐ de	nǐmen de	your; yours	your; yours [plural]
tā de	tāmen de	his; her; hers	their; theirs

These may combine with nouns, as follows:

wǒ de zìdiǎn	my dictionary
tā de hùzhào	her passport

wǒmen de xíngli	our luggage
wǒ de xié<zi>	my shoes
nǐ de dōngxi	your things

The possessive marker de may also link noun modifiers to other nouns:

xuésheng de shūbāo	students' bags
lǎoshī de shū	teachers' books
Zhāng lǎoshī de yǎnjìng	Professor Zhang's glasses
zuótiān de tiānqì	yesterday's weather
jīntiān de bào<zhi>	today's newspaper

### 2.4.3 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns ('this' and 'that') and locational pronouns ('here' and 'there') are shown in the chart below. Examples in context will follow later in the unit.

<i>proximate</i>	<i>distal</i>	<i>question</i>
zhè ~ zhèi 'this'	nà ~ nèi 'that'	nǎ ~ něi 'which'
zhèr ~ zhèlǐ 'here'	nàr ~ nǎlǐ 'there'	nǎr ~ nǎlǐ 'where'

#### Notes

- The forms, zhèi, nèi and něi, are generally found only in combination with a following M: zhè but zhèi ge 'this one'; nà but nèi ge 'that [one]'.  
b) On the Mainland, where both forms of the locational pronouns occur, the *r*-forms are more colloquial, the *lǐ*-forms, more formal. Non-northern speakers of Mandarin, who tend to eschew forms with the *r*-suffix, either merge the locational pronouns with the demonstratives, pronouncing zhèr as zhè, nàr as nà, and nǎr as nǎ, or [particularly in Taiwan] use zhèlǐ, nàlǐ and nǎlǐ (> nálǐ). Notice that in all cases, the distal forms differ from the question forms only in tone: nà / nǎ; nèi / něi, etc.  
c) Before a pause, nà is often used in an extended sense, translated in English as 'well; so; then; in that case':

Nà, wǒmen zǒu ba.	Well, let's go then. (so we leave BA)
Nà, nǐ de xíngli ne?	So how about your luggage then?

#### Exercise 2.

Provide Chinese equivalents for the following phrases and sentences:

my wallet	3 teachers	their clothes
her glasses	2 people	the newspaper on July 4 <sup>th</sup>
his things	4 students	Prof. Zhang's passport
yesterday's paper	2 dollars	her bike

How's Liáng Zhìfǔ doing today? / She's better.  
 How was the weather yesterday? / It was 'freezing' cold!

## 2.5 Identity

Statements such as 'Today's Monday' or 'I'm Oliver' or 'She's an engineer' involve identity or category. In English, the primary verb that serves to identify or categorize is 'be' (whose forms include 'is', 'are', 'was', etc.). In Chinese, the relationship is sometimes expressed by simple juxtaposition, with no explicit linking verb. Dates, for example, can be linked to days, as follows:

Jīntiān jiǔyuè bā hào.	Today's the 8 <sup>th</sup> of September.
Zuótiān qī hào.	Yesterday was the 7 <sup>th</sup> .
Míngtiān jiǔ hào.	Tomorrow's the 9 <sup>th</sup> .

But the addition of an adverb, such bu, requires a verb, and in such cases, shì [usually untuned] must be expressed:

Jīntiān bú shì bā hào,	It's not the 8th today, it's the 9th.
shì jiǔ hào.	

And an untuned shì can also be present in the positive sentences:

Jīntiān <shì> jiǔyuè shí hào.	Today's September 10 <sup>th</sup> .
Míngtiān <shì> Zhōngqiū Jié.	Tomorrow's the 'Mid-Autumn Festival'.
	[ie the 'Moon Festival']

Naming and other kinds of identification sometimes omit shì in fast speech, but more commonly it can be heard as a toneless whisper, 'sh'.

Tā shì Wáng Shuò, wǒ de lǎoshī.	He's Wang Shuo, my teacher.
Wǒmen shì xuésheng, tā shì lǎoshī.	We're students, he's a teacher.
Zhè shì jīntiān de bào.	This is today's paper.
Shì nǐ de yàoshi ma?	Are [these] your keys?
Bú shì wǒ de sǎn, shì tā de.	[That]'s not my umbrella, [it]'s his.
Tāmen dōu shì xuésheng.	They're all students.

*But don't forget, shì is not required with SVs:*

Xuésheng zǒngshì hěn lèi,	The students are always tired, right?
duì bu duì?	

### 2.5.1 Questions

Now we can introduce the question words shéi (or shuí) ‘who, whom’ and shénme ‘what’ (which, like zěnmē, is pronounced [shéme], without the ‘n’). Unlike English, where question words generally appear at the head of the sentence, in Chinese, they remain in the position of the information supplied in the answer. Note the differences in word order between the English sentences and the Chinese:

Tā shì shéi?  
Tā shì wǒ de lǎoshī.

Who’s that?  
That’s my teacher.

Nà shì shénme?  
Nà shì wǒ de hùzhào.

What’s that?  
That’s my passport.

<Shi> shéi de yàoshi?  
<Shi> wǒ de – xièxie.

Whose keys are [these]?  
[They]’re mine – thanks.

<Shi> shuí de xíngli?  
<Shi> wǒmen de.

Whose luggage?  
It’s ours.

Zhè shì shéi de?  
Shì wǒ de.

Whose is this?  
It’s mine.

Shéi shì dì-yī ge?  
Tā shì dì-yī ge.  
Dì-èr ge ne?  
Tā shì dì-èr ge.

Who is the first [one]?  
He’s the first.  
And the second?  
She’s the second.

### 2.5.2 Hedging your answer

Frequently, when asked about identity, the answer is less than certain, so you may want to hedge your reply with a word like hǎoxiàng ‘seems like (good-resemble)’. The following short interchanges involve trying to guess the contents of a series of wrapped packages by feeling them:

Dì-yī shì shénme?  
Dì-yī hǎoxiàng shì yàoshi.

What’s the first?  
The first seems like keys.

Zhè shì shénme?  
Hǎoxiàng shì shū.

What’s this?  
Seems like a book.

Nà, zhè shì shénme?  
Hǎoxiàng shì xiézi.

Well, what’s this?  
Seems like shoes.

### 2.5.3 Naming

Naming is also a form of identification. And in fact, if you were to go round the classroom naming all your tóngxué ‘classmates’, you could do so with the verb shì as follows:

Nà shì Máo Xiān'ān.	That's Mao Xian'an.
Nà shì Léi Hànbo.	That's Lei Hanbo.
Nà shì Lǐ Dān.	That's Li Dan.
Nà hǎoxiàng shì Luó Zhìchéng.	Looks like that's Luo Zhicheng.
Nǐ shì bu shì Luó Zhìchéng?	Are you Luo Zhicheng?
Tā shì Léi Fēng!	He's Lei Feng.

**Exercise 3.**

Provide Chinese for the interchanges:

<i>Q</i>	<i>A</i>
Is it the 29 <sup>th</sup> today?	No, it's the 30 <sup>th</sup> .
Is this your umbrella?	No, that's Prof. Zhang's.
Who's first?	Seems like Wáng Jié is 1 <sup>st</sup> and Liú Guózhèng is 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
Are you all students?	Yes, we're all Prof. Wèi's students.
Is that your bike?	No, it's Léi Fēng's.

## 2.6 Names and titles

Names need not be introduced by shì. In some contexts more specialized verbs must be used. One you encountered in Unit 1: xìng 'be surnamed' (which also functions as a noun meaning 'surname'). Another is jiào 'to be named; to call'. But before we illustrate their use, we should add to the brief remarks about names and titles made in §1.6.1 and §1.9.1.

### 2.6.1 Names

Some common English names are directly transliterated into Chinese: Yuēhàn Shǐmìsī 'John Smith', keeping the English word order of given name before surname. Students of Chinese are usually given Chinese names, based on their own (either their surnames if they have enough syllables, or their full names), and these conform to Chinese types of two or three syllables. In such cases, Chinese word order, with surname before given, is followed. (In all but the first example below, English surnames are reduced to single syllables in the Chinese, as shown by the highlighting.)

<b>Wèi Dēlì</b>	Paul <b>Wheatley</b>
<b>Táng Lìlì</b>	Lily <b>Tomlin</b>
<b>Máo Xiān'ān</b>	Anne <b>Mauboussin</b>
<b>Léi Hànbo</b>	Robert <b>Leonhardt</b>
<b>Lǐ Dān</b>	David <b>Lippmann</b>

Such names are indistinguishable from names of actual Chinese, such as these:

Cū Lín	Kāng Yòuwéi	Yuán Shào	Zhèng Chénggōng
Zhèng Hé	Máo Qíling	Wáng Lì	Bái Sùzhēn

### 2.6.2 Xìng

Chinese names consist of a surname, or xìng, in initial position, followed by a given name or míngzi, literally ‘name-characters’. Xìng are usually – but not always – single syllables. As a verb, xìng is almost always used when asking for, or responding with, someone’s surname:

Tā xìng shénme?	What’s her surname?
Tā xìng Huáng.	She’s surnamed Huang.
Xìng Wáng?	Wang?
Bú shì xìng Wáng, tā xìng Huáng.	No, not Wang, she’s named Huang.

When addressing someone directly, the honorific expression guìxìng ‘worthy-surname’ (cf. guì ‘expensive’), with or without a pronoun, is the usual question:

<Nín> guìxìng?	May [I] ask your surname [please]?
Wǒ xìng Wèi.	I’m surnamed Wei.

### 2.6.3 Jiào

In much of the English speaking world, where informality tends to be considered a virtue, the shift from surname to given name can proceed very quickly. However, in Chinese, address in a professional setting is likely to persist longer as xìng plus title. So under normal levels of politeness, you would question someone about their xìng, not about their míngzi. However, in the appropriate context, it is possible to seek someone’s full name (regardless of the number of syllables). In such cases, the verb jiào ‘be called’ is used. Jiào can take either the person or the word míngzi as its subject; and it takes as its object at least two syllables of a name, never a single syllable. Below are some options, first for Lǐ Xiāngjūn, a three-syllable name, then for Zhèng Hé, with only two.

Q	A
Tā jiào shénme míngzi?	Tā jiào Lǐ Xiāngjūn.
Tā de míngzi jiào shénme?	Tā <de míngzi> jiào <Lǐ> Xiāngjūn.
Tā jiào shénme míngzi?	Tā jiào Zhèng Hé.
Tā de míngzi jiào shénme?	Tā <de míngzi> jiào Zhèng Hé.

### 2.6.4 *Asking and giving a name*

Typically, in face-to-face interaction, one asks politely for a surname, and in many cases, the response will be just a surname. However, where statuses are more or less matched, once the surname is provided, it is often followed by the full name, and this is a good model for the foreign student to copy:

<Nín> guìxìng?	
[Bái Sùzhēn]	Wo xìng Bái, jiào Bái Sùzhēn.
[Xǔ Xiān]	Wǒ xìng Xǔ, jiào Xǔ Xiān.

### 2.6.5 Titles

Here is a short selection of titles to add to lǎoshī. All of them follow a xìng, though some may be used alone under certain conditions. Xiānshēng ‘mister (first-born)’ is the generic title for adult males. In Taiwan, or overseas communities, xiǎojie ‘Miss; Ms (small older-sister)’ is quite a common title for unmarried women up to a certain age or, still with the woman’s xìng, even for young married women. In the same communities, married women can be addressed, with the husband’s xìng, as tàitai (etymologically related to tài, the adverb). The latter term is hardly ever used on the Mainland, and even xiǎojie is used much less there. On the Mainland, if no professional title (such as lǎoshī) is available, the options are to use full name or mingzi, or simply to avoid direct address completely.

Shīfu, literally ‘craftsman’, but often translated as ‘master’, has shifted in its usage in the last few decades, but traditionally, it has been used to address blue-collar workers (male or female). Finally, jīnglǐ ‘manager’, is a professional title for males or females, of the sort that might appear on a business card. Note the order *surname before title*:

surname	(given name)	title	
Wèi	<Bóyáng>	lǎoshī	Professor
Shí	<Jílóng>	xiānsheng	Mr.
Chén	<Yuè>	xiǎojie	Miss; Ms
Wáng	<Guóbǎo>	shīfu	‘master’
Zhōu	<Lǐ>	jīnglǐ	manager

### 2.6.6 Shì with names

As noted above, while surnames [alone] can only be introduced with the verb xìng, full names can be introduced by shì as well as jiào. In fact, unlike the other two verbs, shì can also introduce name and *title*. The shì option identifies one of a known group, and as such, is often appropriate to a classroom setting:

Tā shì Lǐ Guānghuī; tā shì Wáng Shuò; tā shì Táng Bīn; wǒ shì Wèi lǎoshī.  
Dì-yī ge shì Xiāo Míngzuǒ, dì-èr ge shì Lǐ Míng, dì-sān ge shì Xiè Jìng.

Nǐ shì bu shì Zhāng xiānsheng?	Are you Mr. Zhang?
Zhāng jīnglǐ, hǎo.	How are you, Manager Zhang?
Zhè shì Dù shīfu.	This is Master Du.
Wǒ shì Wáng lǎoshī; tāmen dōu shì wǒ de xuéshēng.	I’m Prof. Wang and these are my students.
Chén xiǎojie shì Běijīng rén.	Miss Chen is from Beijing.

### Exercise 4.

a) Assuming you were an official of appropriate rank and eminence to address the question, write out how the following people might respond (in the modern world) to <Nín> guàixìng?

1. Hú Shì, (20<sup>th</sup> C. philosopher and reformer, graduate of Cornell University): Wǒ xìng Hú, jiào Hú Shì.
2. Sīmǎ Qiān (the Han dynasty historian):
3. Zhāng Xuéliáng (Manchurian warlord):
4. Hán Yù (Tang dynasty scholar):
5. Yáng Guīfēi (courtesan, from the late Tang dynasty):
6. Cuī Jiàn (rock musician):

b) Translate the following, being careful to follow Chinese word order:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. I'm a teacher.                                    | 2. Who's she?                                       |
| 3. Her surname's Sòng, her full name's Sòng Měilíng. | 4. Hi, my name's Lǐ Dān.                            |
| 5. Who's he? / He's my teacher.                      | 6. That's Zhōu Lì.                                  |
| 7. His surname's Chén, full name, Chén Bó.           | 8. And him? / His surname's Xǔ, full name, Xǔ Xiān. |
| 11. This is master Wèi.                              | 12. Her name's Smith [Shǐmìsī].                     |

## 2.7 Location and existence

In English, location is expressed with the same verb as identity (or category): the verb 'to be' (is, am, are, etc.). Chinese, however, uses entirely different verbs. Identity is signaled by shì; location, by zài 'be at':

I D	Tā shì xuésheng.	She's a student.
LOC	Tā zài Běijīng.	She's in Beijing.

### 2.7.1 Some Chinese place names

China is called Zhōngguó, often given the literal gloss of 'middle kingdom', a name which goes back to the time when it designated the ruling principality among the many that owed it fealty. The Chinese are then Zhōngguó rén 'Chinese-people'.

Administrative units of the People's Republic include provinces (省 shěng), prefectures (地 dì), counties (县 xiàn), townships (乡 xiāng) and villages (村 cūn). Of these, the county (xiàn) is the unit with the longest historical continuity, dating back some 2500 years. In modern mainland China the highest, or provincial level contains 33 divisions: 22 provinces (with Taiwan considered a 23<sup>rd</sup>), 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities, which are cities ruled by the central government (Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Tiānjīn and Chóngqīng), and 2 special autonomous districts (Hong Kong [Xiāng Gǎng] and Macau [Àomén]).



Taiwan, which administers the island of Táiwān, the Pescadores Islands (Pēnghú), as well as 13 small, scattered offshore islands, has a slightly different administrative structure. It has two centrally administered cities, Taipei (Táiběi) and the south-western city of Kaohsiung (Gāoxióng).

The chart below lists important cities. They can be located in terms of their province (using the verb zài), or in terms of their proximity to another place (using the lí pattern that follows in §2.7.2).

<i>Quadrant</i>	<i>The city of:</i>	<i>is in</i>	<i>the province (shěng) of:</i>
NW	Xīníng	zài	Qīnghǎi <shěng>.
NW	Wūlǔmùqí		Xīnjiāng.
N	Hūhéhàotè		*Nèiménggǔ.
NE	Shěnyáng		Liáoníng.
NE	Chángchūn		Jílín.
NE	Hā'ěrbīn		Hēilóngjiāng.
W	Lāsà		*Xīzàng.
C	Xī'ān		Shǎnxī.
E	Nánjīng		Jiāngsū .
E	Guǎngzhōu		Guǎngdōng.
SW	Guìlín		*Guǎngxī.
SW	Chéngdū		Sìchuān.
SW	Kūnmíng		Yúnnán.

### Notes

- The asterisks (\*) before Nèiménggǔ ‘Inner Mongolia’, Xīzàng ‘Tibet’ and Guǎngxī indicate that they are autonomous regions, zìzhìqū, not shěng.
- Shěnyáng was formerly called by its Manchu name, Mukden.
- The names of two provinces are distinguished only by tone: Shānxī ‘mountains-west’ (which is west of the province of Shāndōng ‘mountains-east’), and Shǎnxī (‘pass-west’) – sometimes romanized as ‘Shaanxi’ or ‘Shenhsi’ to distinguish it, which is west again of Shānxī.

### 2.7.2 Proximity

Relative proximity of one place to another can be expressed by a construction that involves the word lí ‘[away] from’, and the SVs jìn ‘be close’ and yuǎn ‘be far’. Notice the difference in word order from English.

Place-1	lí place-2	proximity
Běijīng	lí Guǎngzhōu	hěn yuǎn / hěn jìn.
<i>Beijing</i>	<i>from Canton</i>	<i>very far / close.</i>

## Usage

Tiānjīn lí Běijīng bǐjiào jìn.

Tiānjīn's quite close to Běijīng.

Xī'ān zài Shǎnxī, lí Běijīng  
bǐjiào yuǎn.

Xi'an's in Shanxi, quite far from Beijing.

Xīníng lí Chéngdū hěn jìn ma?  
*Bú jìn; Xīníng lí Lánzhōu hěn jìn.*Is Xining near Chengdu?  
*No, it's not; it's close to Lanzhou.*Xī'ān lí Běijīng hěn yuǎn, dànshì  
Xīníng gèng yuǎn.Xi'an is far from Běijīng, but  
Xining is even farther.People's Republic of China (PRC):  
Administrative Divisions & Territorial Disputes

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China\\_administrative.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_administrative.png)

2.7.3 Zài 'be+at'

In certain contexts, zài may appear without a [following] object, typically when it means 'be at home', or as a euphemism for 'be alive': tā bú zài 'he's not at home' or 'he's passed away' (the latter meaning more often with le, bú zài le, since that is likely to be news). Otherwise, zài is followed by words or phrases that are locations. But just what constitutes a location is not always obvious. Place names are locations as the examples in §2.7.1 show. So are the locational pronouns:

zài	zhèr ~ zhèlǐ	‘here’
	nàr ~ nàlǐ	‘there’
	nǎr ~ nǎlǐ	‘where’

Otherwise, most nouns need to be followed by one of a number of position words, such as shàng ‘on’ or lǐ ‘in’, before they can be locations and thereby act as objects to zài:

zài	fēijī shàng	on the plane
zài	shūbāo lǐ	in [my] bookbag

However, some common words for places do not always require following position words like shàng or lǐ. Sometimes additional position words are optional; sometimes they add a slight nuance of difference.

zài	jiā <lǐ>	at home
	cāntīng <lǐ>	in the cafeteria
	jīchǎng	at the airport

Before pronouns can act as objects of zài, they need support from one of the locational pronouns, such as zhèr ~ zhèlǐ: zài wǒ zhèr, literally ‘at me here’; zài tā nàr ‘at her there’. English actually expresses the notion more naturally with the verb ‘have’:

Qǐngwèn, jīntiān de bào	Excuse me, where’s today’s paper?
zài nǎr ~ nǎlǐ?	
Zài wǒ zhèr ~ zhèlǐ.	I have it.
Xíngli ne?	And the luggage?
Xíngli zài tā nàr.	He has the luggage.

#### 2.7.4 Zài as a main verb; zài as a co-verb

Zài may be used as a main verb (as in §2.7.1 and below), but it can also introduce a location and appear prior to another verb, in which case it is called a co-verb in Chinese grammatical tradition (CV).

##### a) Examples of zài as a main verb

Qǐngwèn, Mǎ lǎoshī zài ma?	Excuse me, is Prof. Ma here?
Mǎ lǎoshī xiànzài zài Yúnnán.	Prof. Ma is currently in Yunnan.
Yàoshi zài nǎr?	Where are the keys?
Zài nàr. / Zài tā nàr.	[They]’re over there. / She has [them].
Nánjīng lí Héfēi bú tài yuǎn, kěshì Nánjīng zài Jiāngsū, Héfēi zài Ānhuī.	Nanjing’s not far from Hefei, but Nanjing’s in Jiangsu, [and] Hefei’s in Anhui.

Wǒ de hùzhào zài nǐ nàr ma?  
*Bú zài wǒ zhèr!*

Do you have my passport?  
*I don't have [it].*

Nǐ de xíngli zài nǎr?  
*Hái zài fēijī shàng.*

Where are your bags?  
*[They] 're still on the airplane.*

*b) Zài as a co-verb*

Co-verbs are like verbs in allowing direct modification by adverbs, but they frequently correspond to prepositions in English.

Xuésheng zhǒngshí zài cāntīng  
 chīfàn.

Students always eat in the cafeteria.

Wǒmen zài fēijī shàng shuìjiào le.

We slept on the plane.

Zài jiā lǐ chīfàn bǐjiào hǎo.

It's better to eat at home.

In such cases, the *zài*-phrase expresses the location of an action. Later, you will see that *zài*-phrases also follow certain verbs (where *zài* is usually untuned): shēng zài Běijīng 'born in Beijing'.

**2.7.5 The verb yǒu 'have'**

The verb yǒu, with an 'irregular' negative méiyǒu or simply méi, was encountered in the previous unit as the negative counterpart of le with action verbs: Chīfàn le méiyǒu? Used alone, as a main verb, it conveys possession and existence:

*Possession*    Wǒ yǒu sān ge hùzhào.  
                   Wǒ méiyǒu sǎn.  
                   Xuéshēng dōu yǒu zìdiǎn.

I have 3 passports.  
 I don't have an umbrella.  
 The students all have dictionaries.

*Existence*    Wǒ méiyǒu xíngli.  
                   Nánjīng méiyǒu dìtiě.  
                   Chēzi lǐ yǒu yīfu, yě yǒu  
                   shūbāo.

I don't have any baggage.  
 There's no underground railway in  
 Nanjing.  
 There are clothes and bookbags in the car.

**Summary**

<i>Identity; category</i>	(bú) shì	Nà shì jīntiān de bào. Tā shì lǎoshī.	is	That's today's paper. She's a teacher.
<i>Location</i>	(bú) zài	Chéngdū zài Sìchuān.	is (in etc.)	Chengdu's in Sichuan.
<i>Existence</i>	(méi)you	Xī'ān méiyǒu jīchǎng.	[there] is /are	There's no airport in Xi'an.
<i>Possession</i>	(méi)you	Wǒ méiyǒu hùzhào.	have	I don't have a passport.
<i>Proximity</i>	lí...(bú) jìn / (bù) yuǎn	Tiānjīn lí Běijīng bù yuǎn.	is close to / is far from	Tianjin's close to Beijing.

**Exercise 5.**

Render the following short exchanges in idiomatic Chinese. [Hint: Chinese would probably not make use of the verb yǒu 'have' in the A and C -dialogues.]

	<b>Jiǎ</b>	<b>Yǐ</b>
A.	-Where's the paper please? -No, today's. -You had it earlier.	-Yesterday's? -Sorry, I don't have it. -But I don't have it now.
B.	-Have you eaten yet? -Oh, you've already eaten! -Is your dorm far from here?	-I have. -Yes, in the dorm. -It's kind of far.
C.	-Whose bookbag?  -Is it Lǐ Dān's? -Is it 'young' Liú's? -Then it's Sūn Hào's.	-Not mine, I don't have a bookbag. -No, I have Lǐ Dān's. -No, he's not up yet. -Is it?

**2.8 Miscellany****2.8.1 Welcome**

The dialogue at the end of this unit contains an expression used for welcoming someone to a place. Explicit welcomes are probably more likely to be seen written on signs in shops than spoken, but they are not out of place with foreigners. The verbs are huānyíng 'welcome' and lái 'come'. With the verb lái, destinations (rather than locations *per se*) can follow directly without any equivalent to the English preposition 'to': lái Běijīng, lái Guǎngzhōu. Notice that in English, the people being welcomed ('you') are not mentioned, while in Chinese, they are (nǐmen):

Huānyíng nǐmen lái Chéngdū!      Welcome to Chengdu.

In Chinese settings, explicit thanks are usually reserved for favors that go beyond the expected. But given the airport context, an expression of gratitude as a response to the welcome is not inappropriate. This one involves the verbs xiè ‘to thank’ – frequently repeated as xièxiè – and the verb, jiē ‘to meet; join’. The order is like that of English, but Chinese eschews connective words like ‘to’ and ‘for’. (‘Thank you for coming to meet us’ appears in Chinese as simply ‘thank you come meet us’.)

Xièxiè nǐmen lái jiē wǒmen.      Thanks for coming to meet us.

In China, shops and other business establishments often have a formal expression of welcome written near the entrance. This expression is: 欢迎光临 huānyíng guānglín, or xièxiè guānglín (both with the preferred four syllables). Guānglín, literally ‘illustrious presence’, is a fancy word for ‘guest’ or ‘visitor’. Sometimes, especially at openings or sales, ‘welcome hostesses’ (huānyíng xiǎojiē), stationed at the shop entrance wearing red costumes, will welcome or thank you with the same phrases.



Huānyíng nǐmen! [JKW 2003]

### 2.8.2 Particles

In addition to ma and ne, there are two other common final particles which have been encountered in the first two units. One is the particle a, which among its diverse functions, gives a hearty tone to statements or exclamations, and which slightly softens the abruptness of questions:

Lěng a!	[Wow, it]’s cold!
Máng a!	Busy, huh?!
Shéi a?	[Knock, knock.] Who [is it]?

The other is ba, which is associated with *suggestion* or *consensus*:

Zǒu ba.	Let's go.
Nà hǎo ba.	That's fine then.
Shàngchē ba.	Let's board the bus.

### 2.8.3 Praise

Chinese will praise your efforts to speak their language (called Zhōngwén or Hànyǔ), and will typically make use of an expression involving the verb shuō 'speak' (or, in southern Mandarin, jiǎng) followed by the particle +de. If you wonder whether this +de is the same as the possessive de introduced earlier in this unit, the answer is that it is not. This +de is followed by SV expressions (eg an adverb plus a SV): shuō+de hěn hǎo. The other is either followed by a noun (wǒ de shūbāo) or has the potential to be followed by a noun (wǒ de [shūbāo]). Were meaning and distribution not sufficient evidence for positing two different de's, we should cite the fact that they are also written with different characters, 的 (wǒ de) and 得 (shuō+de), respectively. So in order to make the distinction clear (and prepare you for writing different characters), we write the former as de and the latter as +de. You should do the same.

Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo.	[You] speak Chinese very well.
~ jiǎng+de hěn hǎo.	

To which you respond, modestly, that in fact you don't speak at all well:

Shuō+de bù hǎo	[I] speak very poorly.
~ jiǎng+de bù hǎo.	

The latter can be preceded by the expression nǎlǐ (often repeated), which is the [more formal] word for 'where', but which is also used to deflect praise, as if questioning its basis:

Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo.	Nah, I speak rather badly.
~ jiǎng+de bù hǎo.	

When you see more examples, you will find that nothing can intervene in the combination shuō+de. So if Zhōngwén (or Hànyǔ) is mentioned, it cannot directly follow shuō, but needs to be cited first, as shown in the examples above. Since Chinese are so gracious about praising one's feeble efforts to speak their language, it is good to get used to this interchange early. For now, though, practice it only as it appears, and only with the verb shuō and its southern Mandarin counterpart, jiǎng.

## 2.9 Dialogue: at the airport

Given the need to restrict vocabulary and structures, the following dialogue cannot be regarded as completely natural, but it serves as a good model for some of the material that has been introduced in the first two units.

*Situation: Professor Wáng (W) has come to the airport with a university driver to meet half a dozen international students who are arriving in China to continue their study of Chinese. The students all have Chinese names as well as their regular ones. One of them (Dàwéi [Dw]) spots Wáng lǎoshī holding a sign and walks over to introduce himself; some of the others follow and introduce themselves too. [X designates any one, or a few.]*

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| Dw | Nín hǎo, wǒ shì Máo Dàwéi.                     | How are you, I'm Mao Dawei.  |
| W. | O, Máo Dàwéi, wǒ shì Wáng lǎoshī.              | Oh, Mao Dawei, I'm Prof. Wang.                                     |
| An | Wáng lǎoshī, nín hǎo! Wǒ shì Lǐ Ānnà.          | Prof. Wang, how are you? I'm Li Anna.                              |
| W. | Lǐ Ānnà, nǐ hǎo.                               | Li Anna, how are you?  |
| Ym | Wáng lǎoshī, wǒ shì Xiǎolín Yóuměi.            | Professor Wang, I'm Xiaolin Youmei.                                |
| W. | Xiǎolín Yóuměi, nǐ hǎo.<br>Hǎo, sān ge rén le. | Xiaolin Youmei, hi. Okay, [that's] 3.                              |
| Ym | Hái yǒu tā – tā xìng Kǒng, jiào Kǒng Měi.      | [pointing] And her too -- her name is Kong, she's called Kong Mei. |
| W. | Hǎo, Kǒng Měi, nǐ hǎo!<br>Sì ge rén le. Nǐ ne? | Fine, how are you Kong Mei? [That's] 4 then. And [who are] you?    |
| Jf | Wǒ shì Bái Jiéfei.                             | I'm Bai Jiefei.  |

- 
- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| W.  | Bái Jiéfei, nǐ hǎo....<br>Nà hǎo, huānyíng nǐmen lái Běijīng! | Bai Jiefei, hi....<br>Okay, then, welcome to Beijing! |
| All | Xièxie, xièxie nǐmen lái jiē wǒmen.                           | Thanks; thank you for coming to meet us.              |
| W.  | Zhè shì Gāo shīfu.  | This is Mr. Gao.                                      |
| All | Gāo shīfu, nín hǎo.   | Mr. Gao, how are you?                                 |



Gāo	Èi, nǐmen hǎo, nǐmen hǎo. Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo!	Ah, how are you, how are you? [You] speak Chinese very well!
All	Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo!	Nah, we don't speak very well.

---

W.	Nǐmen hěn lèi ba.	You're probably tired.
X.	Bù, bú tài lèi, hái hǎo.	No, not too, [we]'re okay.
W.	È ma? Chīfàn le ma?	Are [you] hungry? Have [you] eaten?
X..	Bú è, zài fēijī shàng chī le.	No, [we]'re not, [we] ate on the airplane.
W.	Nà, nǐmen de xíngli ne?	And your bags?
X.	Zài zhèr: yī, èr, sān, sì, wǔ, liù. Dōu zài zhèr.	[They]'re here: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. [They]'re all here.

---

W.	Nà hǎo, wǒmen zǒu ba. Shàng chē ba.	Fine, let's go then. All aboard!
X.	Hǎo, hǎo.	Okay.
W.	Jīntiān yǒu diǎnr rè, nǐmen rè ma?	[Aboard the minibus.] [It]'s kind of hot today; are you hot?
X.	Bù, bú rè, hái hǎo. Wǒmen dōu hěn shūfu.	No, [we]'re not, [we]'re fine. We're all comfortable.
W.	Xíngli, hùzhào, sǎn dōu yǒu ma?	[You] have [your] bags, [your] passports, umbrellas?
X.	Dōu yǒu, dōu yǒu, xièxie.	[We] have them all, thanks.
W.	Hǎo, nà wǒmen zǒu ba.	Fine, so... let's go then!
X.	Běijīng hěn yuǎn ma?	Is Beijing far?
W.	Bù, lí zhèr bù yuǎn – hěn jìn!	No, it's not far from here – quite close!

This model conversation is quite ambitious. All its vocabulary is fairly new, of course, and it also introduces quite a few grammatical patterns and features. But a bold beginning has the advantage of giving you interesting material to work with from the start. To make it more manageable, it is divided into four sections. The first involves collecting all the people; the second, with welcoming them; the third, with finding out how they are; and the fourth, with getting to the minibus to drive to Beijing. Get familiar with the scenario first, then visualize the conversation. You should be able to re-enact it more or less as presented before trying it out with partners.

### **Exercise 6.**

#### *a) Translate the following*

1. Okay, that's three people.
2. Who's the first person? The second?
3. That's it then, I'm off.
4. It's late, I should be going.
5. We've all eaten, we ate on the plane.
6. We're not hungry, we're fine.
7. Welcome to [...].
8. Thanks for coming to meet us.
9. That's it then, see you tomorrow.
10. Okay, bye, take it easy.
11. How about you – you thirsty?
12. That looks like my umbrella.

#### *b) Comment that*

1. you haven't eaten yet.
2. they haven't left yet.
3. she hasn't had her shower yet.
4. he hasn't got out of class yet.
5. you haven't read the day's paper yet.
6. you were tired yesterday, but today you're fine.
7. you're not nervous anymore.
8. you were cold on the plane, but you're fine now.
9. they've already gone to bed.

---

### **2.9.1 Airports and airlines**

China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects in the last few decades, including the construction of new airports (jīchǎng) and the reconstruction of old ones. An airport said to be the world's largest is due to be completed near Beijing in time for the 2008 Olympics. Some of the better known airports are Capital (Shǒudū) in Beijing, Báiyún ('white clouds') in Canton, and Hóngqiáo (the old airport) and Pǔdōng (the new) in Shanghai – the last two both named after districts. Pǔdōng, which like so many of the new airports is far out of town, is served by a German-built mag-lev (magnetic levitation) train (officially called a cíxuán-fúchē 'magnet-suspend float-vehicle', but colloquially

referred to as a diàncíhē ‘electromagnetic-vehicle’). It reaches a top speed of 430 kilometers an hour during its 7-8 minute run between the airport and its city terminus at an outlying subway station.

Airlines are proliferating and consolidating in China. ‘Airline’ is hángkōng gōngsī, literally ‘aviation company’. Here is a list of some of the larger Chinese airlines for you to practice saying:

Zhōngguó Hángkōng Gōngsī	Air China
Zhōngguó Dōngfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Eastern Airlines
Zhōngguó Běifāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Northern Airlines
Zhōngguó Xīběi Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Northwest Airlines
Zhōngguó Nánfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Southern Airlines
Zhōngguó Xīnán Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Southwest Airlines
Xīnjiāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	Xinjiang Airlines
Yúnnán Hángkōng Gōngsī	Yunnan Airlines
Gǎnglóng Hángkōng Gōngsī	Dragonair [Hong Kong-dragon...]



Arriving at Xīníng, the capital of Qīnghǎi. [JKW 2005]

## 2.10 Reflections: What have you learned?

### 2.10.1 Words

Short words predominate. Most, but not all, Chinese words longer than a syllable are, historically at least, compounds: lǎoshī ‘old-teacher’ (with ‘old’ having the respectful connotations of ‘venerable’); xǐzǎo ‘wash-bathe’; hǎoxiàng ‘good-likeness’.

### 2.10.2 Meaning

In learning a foreign language, particularly a language that is linguistically and culturally distant from one’s native tongue, you quickly learn about the difficulties of translation. This is true for sentences as well as words. Hái hǎo, for example, as a response to Lèi bu

lèi? is composed of two words which, in other contexts, mean ‘still’ and ‘be+good’. But ‘still good’ does not make sense as a translation. ‘Not too’ or ‘no, I’m fine’ are closer to the Chinese sense, *a fact we can only know from understanding how the Chinese functions in its context, then seeking an English expression that serves the same function* (or has the same meaning in the context). As translators will tell you, this can be difficult to do, and in some cases nearly impossible without extensive circumlocution.

For learners, it is not enough to know the meaning of the sentence in context; learners want, and need to understand the role of sentence parts – words – in the formation of that meaning. One reason for this is that word meanings, or glosses, being more abstract, are more stable. ‘Good’ (or ‘be good’) is abstracted from the meaning of the word in specific contexts (where it may be translated variously as ‘be well’, ‘be okay’, ‘hello’, ‘nice’). That is why, in addition to citing a meaning appropriate to the context, word meanings are also provided in parentheses: eg: Hái hǎo ‘[I]’m okay. (still be+good)’

Providing word-for-word glosses serves another purpose. It takes us into the world of the foreign language and reveals conceptual differences that help to define the other culture. The fact that chīfàn ‘have a meal’ (and, by extension, in other contexts ‘make a living’) is composed of chī ‘eat’ and fàn ‘cooked rice’, reveals the role of that staple in the Chinese diet. It is a moot point whether translators should try to capture that fact by translating chīfàn as ‘eat-rice’ rather than simply ‘eat’ or ‘have a meal’. What do you think?

## 2.11 Pinyin notes and practice

### 2.11.1 Toneless syllables

As you have observed, not all syllables in Mandarin have a tone, eg: the second syllables in xínglǐ and máng ma. In this respect, Mandarin contrasts with some of the regional languages such as Cantonese, in which most syllables are toned. There are several types of toneless syllable (called qīngshēng ‘light-tone’) in standard Mandarin:

- (i) Particles such as ma, ne and ba never appear with a full tone, and so we can only write them with qīngshēng.
- (ii) Many words show qīngshēng in the final syllable: shūfu ‘comfortable’, or wǒmen ‘we; us’. On the evidence of compounds and other relatable expressions, these toneless syllables often turn out to have fully toned versions: shūfu has an adverbial form, shūshufúfú in which final fú appears with a rising tone. But dictionaries list words such as wǒmen and shūfu without tone on the second syllable, and we will do the same.
- (iii) Certain words (syllables) are toned in some contexts, toneless in others: bú lèi (with bú toned) but hǎo bu hǎo (with bu toneless). We will follow pronunciation in such cases, writing the tone in citation in contexts where it is pronounced, but omitting it in appropriate grammatical contexts.

- (iv) Finally, the incidence of *qīngshēng* varies with the rate and formality of speech as well as the region (with the northeast being particularly susceptible to toneless syllables). Thus in fast speech, jīntiān ‘today’ may be pronounced jīntian, without tone on tian. In these cases, we will still write the full tone, using current dictionaries as our guide.

For students’ purposes, the general rule is: you are always safe in writing the word in its lexical, careful, slow speech form, e.g.: wǒmen, shūfu, hǎo bù hǎo, jīntiān.

*a) Writing changed tones*

In this text, we do not write the changed tone for combinations of low tones; we write hěn hǎo, and apply the rule. This accords with the standard rules for writing pinyin entries in dictionaries or in continuous text. We do make an exception in writing the changed tones for bù and yì, however: bù gāo but bú lèi; yì zhāng but yí ge.

### 2.11.2 A pinyin quirk

Standard pinyin writes shénme, zěnmē (‘how’) and zánmen (‘we [inclusive]’), all with a medial ‘n’ that is not reflected in the pronunciation. This compares to other systems of transcription, such as Yale which writes *shéme*, National Romanization, which writes *sherme* (with the ‘r’ representing the rising tone), and Zhuyin Fuhao which writes ㄕㄜ ㄇㄛ, ie *she me* – none of them with an internal ‘n’. The reason pinyin writes a silent -n in these words has to do with the characters that represent them. The first syllable of shénme, zěnmē and zánmen are written with characters that are, in other contexts, pronounced shèn (with falling tone), zěn and zán respectively. While one is tempted to rectify the system and simply write shéme, zěmē and zámen in conformity with actual pronunciations, pinyin is now regarded as a standard transliteration in the Chinese speaking world and we should accept it as it is, if for no other reason than the fact that reference materials as well as computer input systems are based on it.

### 2.11.3 Tone combos (the next 6)

Recall the prototype examples of the six sets of tone combos presented in Unit 1: lǎoshī hái hǎo, zàijiàn, bú rè, hěn máng, bù gāo. Now we add six more combos – the first three all beginning with level-toned syllables – for a total of 12 of the 15.

7	8	9
Kūnmíng	jīchǎng	chīfàn
Zhōngwén	Wēiruǎn (Microsoft)	qī hào
huānyíng	Qīnghǎi	tiānqì
10	11	12
Héféi	qǐngwèn	zìdiǎn
Yúnnán	hǎokàn	dìtiě (underground train)
tóngxué (classmate)	yǎnjìng	Hànyǔ

**Exercise 7.**

a) Place the tone marks over the following words. (You may need to review the appropriate part of the lesson on sounds and symbols.)

level tone	jie	qiao	nao	jiu	cui
low	zei	pou	shao	xiao	bie
rising	xue	bei	tuo	zhui	liao

b) Now focus on the problematical initials – those found on lines 3,4,5 of our initial chart. Assign a tone, and the practice reading down:

ti	ta	dang		dou	dao
ci	ca	zang	si	zou	zao
ch!i	ch!a	zhang	shi	zhou	zhao
qi	qia	jiang	xi	jiu	jiao

**2.12 Summary**

tài...le	Tài máng le. (Bú tài máng.)
Adverbs	Zǒngshì hěn máng hěn lèi; gèng máng; yǒu yìdiǎnr lěng; etc.
SVs	Hěn nán; Bù hǎochī; Hěn lìhai.
Zěnmeyàng	Jīntiān zěnmeyàng? Nǐ juéde zěnmeyàng?
Nouns	yàoshi, xíngli, dōngxì, zìxíngchē, etc.
M-words	èrshí ge <xuéshēng>; sān kuài <qián>
DE	wǒ de zìdiǎn; zuótīān de bào
Demonstr.	zhè ~ zhèi; zhèr ~ zhèlǐ
Identity	Jīntiān qī hào; Dōu shì wǒ de xuéshēng.
QWs	shéi, shénme, nǎr ~ nǎlǐ, guìxìng, zěnmeyàng
Naming	Tā xìng Zhāng, jiào Zhāng Démíng; tā shì Zhāng Démíng.
Titles	Wèi lǎoshī; Gāo shīfu; Zhōu jīnglǐ
Location	Xíngli dōu zài zhèr; Dōu zài wǒ zhèr.
Loc'n with V	Wǒmen zài fēijī shàng chī le.
Proximity	Tiānjīn lí Běijīng hěn jìn.
Possession	Wǒ méiyǒu xíngli.
Existence	Nánjīng méiyǒu dìtiě.
Welcome	Huānyíng nǐmen lái Běijīng. / Xièxie nǐmen lái jiē wǒmen.
PTs	Shàngchē ba.
Praise	Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo! / Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo.
Airports	Zhōngguó Hángkōng Gōngsī; jīchǎng; guónèi, guójì
Qīngshēng	xíngli; zǒu ba

### 2.13 Rhymes and rhythms

First a short rhyme that gives you practice with M-words: zhī (written with a different character from the zhī used with bǐ ‘pen’) is the M for animals such as chickens (yì zhī jī) and, as below, frogs; zhāng is a M for flat things such as tickets, tables, maps, lawns, as well as mouths; tiáo is a M for sinuous objects. Yǎnjīng ‘eye’ is tonally distinct from yǎnjìng ‘glasses’; eyes are counted by way of the default M, ge. Dàshēng, literally ‘big-sound’, is ‘loud’; xiǎoshēng is the opposite.

#### *Yì zhī qīngwā*

Yì zhī qīngwā, yì zhāng zuǐ,	one frog, one mouth
liǎng ge yǎnjīng, sì tiáo tuǐ.	two eyes, four legs.

<i>Nǐ shuō:</i>	<i>You say it:</i>
<i>Shuō dàshēng yìdiǎnr:</i>	<i>Say it louder:</i>
<i>Shuō xiǎoshēng yìdiǎnr:</i>	<i>Say it softer:</i>

#### *Dà jiǎo*

Dà jiǎo dà, dà jiǎo dà,	Big feet big, big feet big,
yīntiān xià yǔ bú hàipà;	cloudy fall+rain not fear;
dà jiǎo hǎo, dà jiǎo hǎo,	big feet good, big feet good,
yīntiān xià yǔ shuāi bù dǎo.	cloudy fall rain slip-not-fall.

<i>Nursery rhyme (colloquial)</i>	<i>‘Big feet’ in contrast to bound feet, presumably.</i>
-----------------------------------	--

#### *Ràokǒulǐng ‘tongue twisters’*

[Traditional] characters are included to show how the phonetic components of Chinese characters provide visual support for these two tongue twisters.

Māma qí mǎ, mǎ màn, māma mà mǎ.  
 媽媽騎馬，馬慢，媽媽罵馬。  
 Mum rides horse, horse slow, mum scolds horse.

Niūniū qiān niú, niú nìng, niūniū niǔ niú.  
 妞妞牽牛，牛倏，妞妞扭牛。  
 Little-girl leads ox, ox cunning, little-girl wrenches ox.

## 第二課 Dì-èr kè

## Lesson 2

他一我百，他十我千。

Tā yī wǒ bǎi, tā shí wǒ qiān.

Others 1 me 100, others 10 me 1000.

*Characterizing one's determination to outdo others to succeed.*

## 2.0 Review

Fántǐzì 'traditional characters'

甲

今天很熱！

還沒，我不餓，今天太忙了。

今天好了，但是昨天很累。

已經上班了。

明天有課嗎？

明天三十號嗎？... 沒有；

三十號沒有，一號有。

你太忙了！

乙

很熱！你吃飯了嗎？

我也很忙。你累嗎？

小李已經上班了嗎？

哦，上班了。

沒有，你呢？

我呢，三十號有課，一號也

有課！

我們都很忙！a) *Compound characters*

As noted in Unit 1, the majority of characters can be resolved into two immediate constituents which, allowing for minor modifications, can stand alone as characters in their own right. The configuration of constituents can be horizontal (很), vertical (季), or superimposed (国/國 guó 'country'). The most recurrent of these constituents are the radicals. They serve as tags for classifying characters into groups for purposes of retrieval (in dictionaries or filing systems, for example). Thus, compound characters with the radical 口 kǒu 'mouth; entrance' can be grouped together: 吃, 吗, 喝, 呢; or those with 言/讠 yán 'speech': 說/说, 話/话, 請/请, 誰/谁。 The radicals have names, based on either their position in the character, or their meaning: thus 口 kǒu 'mouth; entrance' on the left is called kǒuzipáng ('mouth-character-beside') in Chinese, or 'the mouth radical' in English; 雨 (yǔ 'rain') when it appears on the top of a graph (零) is called yǔzìtóu 'rain-character-on top' in Chinese, or the 'rain radical' in English. Here, for review, are some of the Unit 1 compound characters organized by radical:



*Note: Where the combining form of the radical cannot be printed on its own, the equivalent free form, if one still exists, is given in parentheses; if no free form is current, the parentheses enclose a blank.*

<i>radical character</i>	<i>general meaning</i>	<i>Chinese name</i>	<i>examples</i>
木	wood; tree	mùzìpáng	林
		mùzìtóu	李
口	mouth; opening	kǒuzìpáng	嗎/吗，呢，吃
日	sun	rìzìpáng	昨，明
言/讠	speech	yánzìpáng	課/课
女	woman	nǚzìpáng	她，姓
(人)	man; person	rénzìpáng	他，你，們/们
(水)	water	sāndiǎnshuǐ 3 dots water	沒/没
( )		tóngzìkuàng 'tong'-character-frame	周，(同)
(辵)	movement	zǒuzhīpáng	還/还
食/饣	food	shízìpáng	餓/饿，飯/饭
(心)	heart	shùxīnpáng vertical-heart-beside	忙
糸	silk	jiǎosīpáng twisted-silk-beside	經/经
(火)	fire	sìdiǎnshuǐ four-dots-water	熱/热
亻		shuānglǐrén double-stand-person	很，得 (dé)

## 2.1 First set

是 男 的 女 第 小

4+5  
shì  
be

2+5  
nán  
male

5+3  
de  
's ~ s'

3+0  
nǚ  
female

6+5  
dì  
ordinal

3+0  
xiǎo  
small; young

馬 陳 張 誰 這 都

9~10+0

3+8

3+8

7+8

3+7

8+3

马 陈 张 谁 这

3+0  
mǎ  
surname  
horse

2+5  
Chén  
surname

3+4  
Zhāng  
surname

2+8  
shéi ~ shuí  
who; whom

3+4  
zhè ~ zhèi  
this

8+2  
dōu  
all; none



Hong Kong: 押 yā 'pledge', the sign for pawn shops. [JKW 2004]

## Notes

- a) 是 ‘be the case’, like 明 and 昨, assigns 日 ‘sun’ as radical (in this case combined vertically with 疋). One [nonsense] account of the graph goes: ‘the sun, over the horizon (the horizontal stroke) feeding sustenance (‘being’) through the vertical pipe – with a valve – to mankind (人)’.
- b) The graph 女, said to originate as a drawing of a woman, appears as ‘radical’ in 姓 xìng ‘surname<d>’, 她 tā ‘she; her’, and 好 hǎo ‘good’. 男 ‘man; male’ is a compound graph, with the elements 田 tián ‘field’ and 力 lì ‘strength’ arranged vertically (looking vaguely like a ‘man working in the fields’). In colloquial speech, nán and nǚ appear in compounds such as nánde and nǚde, with de representing the possessive and attributive marker (ie, ‘the male one’ and ‘the female one’).
- c) 第 dì introduces the ‘bamboo’ radical, which when appearing on top is called zhúzitóu ‘bamboo-character-on top’. The radical appears in graphs associated with bamboo (eg 筷子 kuàizi ‘chopsticks’) or with properties of bamboo such as segmentation (節/节 jié ‘segment; program’) or splitting (笑 xiào ‘laugh’). The ‘body’ of 第 contains 弓 gōng ‘a bow’, which appears as the assigned radical of 張/张 zhāng.
- d) 小 xiǎo ‘small’ is to be distinguished from 少 shǎo ‘few’. The stroke order is dominant (the gōu-stroke), followed by left and right diǎn – as in the body of 你 nǐ.
- e) The surnames: 馬 ‘horse’, originating as a drawing of the animal, is used for its sound value in 嗎 and 媽, but is assigned as radical in graphs used for words connected with horses, such as 馳 chí ‘to speed; gallop’ or 騎 qí ‘to straddle; ride’ (cf §2.5.5 below). The graph 陳/陈, also a surname, contains 東/东 dōng ‘east’ (use for its sound value) and a radical called ‘left ear’ in Chinese: 𦇧 ěrdūō. Its right hand counterpart, seen in 都 dōu, is called 𦇨 ěrdūō ‘right ear’ and is considered a different radical (and in fact, has a different source character historically). 張/张, the last of the three surnames introduced in this set, contains 弓 gōng ‘a bow’ (seen in 第), and 長/长 cháng ‘long’, used for its sound value.
- f) The right hand element of 誰, 隹 (pronounced zhuī on its own), which occurs in a family of characters that includes 推 tuī ‘push’ (cf §2.7), should be noted as ‘8 strokes’ in order to distinguish it from another commonly occurring element in compound characters, 住 zhù ‘live’, with only 7.
- g) The element on the left of 這 (sometimes printed with two dots instead of one) is a left-side version of a more complex graph, 辵, whose core meaning is ‘stopping and starting’. As a radical, it goes under the name of 辵 zǒuzhīr, and appears in graphs such as 迎 yíng ‘welcome’ and 近 jìn ‘near’. 言, which is given radical status when it appears on the left of the graph (or at the bottom), forms the core in this case. Notice that when it is a core element, 言 does not simplify to 讠 as it would if it were the radical; instead, the graph 文 wén ‘language’ (see §2.2 below) is used (这), presumably because its first two strokes match those of 言.

h) 者 zhě is the root element of a set that includes 都 dōu, 煮 zhǔ ‘to boil’ and 堵 dǔ ‘to obstruct’. (Can you identify the radicals of each?) Though there is no simplified version of 都, the element on the right (yòu’ěrdūō) which is assigned as its radical, is written with three strokes in the traditional set, but only two in the simplified. A [nonsense] account of the graph, 都, goes: ‘土 ‘earth’ over 日 ‘sun’, connected by a line ( ) to suggest ‘all; everything’, with the ‘3’ at the right indicating ‘all’ 3 states of matter.’

### 2.1.1 Phrases

是不是	男的	女的	第一	第三	很小
shì bu shì	nán de	nǚ de	dì-yī	dì-sān	hěn xiǎo
小李	姓马	姓张	姓陈	谁的	这是
xiǎo Lǐ	xìng Mǎ	xìng Zhāng	xìng Chén	shéi de	zhè shì...
都是	不都是	男女	我的	你们的	也是
dōu shì	bù dōu shì	nán nǚ	wǒ de	nǐmen de	yě shì

### Exercise 1

Refer to the table to answer the questions below:

第—x ge	姓?	男/女?	?
第四个	姓马	是男的	很饿，还没吃饭呢。
第七个	姓毛	是女的	不饿，已经吃饭了。
第一个	姓王	是女的	还没上课呢。
第九个	姓张	是男的	吃饭了，但是还没上班。
第二个	姓周	是女的	很忙，也很累。
第五个	小马	是女的	很累，还没上课。
第三个	小陈	是男的	昨天很累，今天好了。
第六个	姓白	是男的	今天没有课。
第八个	姓林	是女的	还没下班。
第十个	姓李	是女的	已经吃了，不饿了。

## Questions

- |               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| 1。 谁是第一个？     | 第一个是男的吗？ |
| 2。 第二个是不是姓李？  | 第二个忙不忙？  |
| 3。 第三个姓陈吗？    | 他今天很累吗？  |
| 4。 第四个是男的吗？   | 他吃饭了没有？  |
| 5。 第五个是不是小白？  | 她上班了吗？   |
| 6。 第六个是男的吗？   | 他今天忙不忙？  |
| 7。 第七个姓马吗？    | 她吃了没有？   |
| 8。 第八个是女的吗？   | 她下班了没有？  |
| 9。 第九个已经上班了吗？ | 他吃了吗？    |
| 10。 第十个也吃了吗？  | 她姓陈吗？    |
- 

## 2.2 Second set

學生

3+13 5+0

老師

6+0 3+7

點兒

12+5 2+6

学

3+5  
xué shēng  
study; school pupil

师

3+3  
shī lǎo  
teacher old

点儿

4+5 2+0  
diǎn ér > r  
point; bit diminutive

怎 麼 樣      對      難      中 文

4+5

3+11

4+11

3+11

8+11

1+3

4+0

么 样      对      难

zěn  
how

1+2

me  
interrogative

4+6

yàng  
kind; type

3+2

duì  
correct; right

8+2

nán  
difficult

zhōng  
middle;  
'China'

wén  
script;  
lg

Notes:

(a) A nonsense account of 學 goes: 'a child looking at a blackboard on a stand; the backboard has two x's, each registered on both sides'. For 生 'be born; pupil': 'three horizontals represent the three stages of life – youth, maturity, old age, with the first marked (with a piě stroke) as the time of education'.

(b) 老 ('old') is itself a radical (as indicated by the numerical designation, 6+0), though one occurring in very few characters. Distinguish 老 from the left-hand side of 都. For the graph, think: 'elderly person taking a rest under an awning'. 師 / 师, with 巾 'cloth' (3 strokes) designated the radical: 'teacher wearing a mortar-board, standing before a podium covered by a cloth.' (The right-hand element of 師 / 师 – the podium – has a clear top, unlike the graph 市 shì 'market; city', which has an extra dot.)

c) In 點, 占 is phonetic (cf. 店 diàn 'shop') and the radical is 黑 hēi 'black' (with the 4 dots, a combining form of the fire-radical); hence 'specks [of soot]' and 'a little bit'. 兒, originally a picture of a child with a large head, appears in compounds such as 兒子 érzi 'son' and 女兒 nǚ'ér 'daughter' and has a root meaning of 'child'. 兒 is one source of the noun suffix -r (seen in words such as yìdiǎnr).

d) 怎 and 昨 are members of a phonetic set based on the element 乍 zhà. 麼 is simplified by letting a part of the original stand for the whole: 麼 > 么. In the traditional form, the lower right element has two slightly different variants: 麼 and 麼. A nonsense account: 'a shed (广), 2 trees (林), and a nose (么) sniffing them to find out WHAT they are'. 樣 yàng consists of 木 as radical (mùzìpáng), 羊 yáng (a phonetic element), and 永 yǒng. 樣 may originally have referred to a wooden mold or pattern, from which the meaning of 'type; kind' derived.

e) In both 對 > 对 and 難 > 难, the complicated left hand elements are replaced with the simple 又 (yòu). In 難, 隹 (zhuī) is assigned as radical; in 誰, 言 is

radical, 隹 is phonetic (cf. zhuī / shuǐ ~ shéi). The left-hand side of 難 shows 夫 inserted through a flattened 口.

f) 文 wén originally meant decoration (and was probably a drawing of a design); later it came to mean written language, and is now often used for language in general. The earlier meaning of ‘decoration’ is now represented by 紋 wén (with the silk radical added).

### 2.2.1 Compounds

学生	老师	一点儿	一点点	有一点难	不对
xuéshēng	lǎoshī	yídiǎnr	yídiǎndiǎn	yǒu yídiǎn nán	bú duì
中文	不太难	是学生吗?	怎么样	三个	日文
Zhōngwén	bú tài nán	Shì xuéshēng ma?	zěnmeyàng	sān ge	Rìwén
三个男的	没有女的	难不难	对不对	陈老师	男的
sān ge nánde	méiyǒu nǚde	nán bù nán	duì bu duì	Chén lǎoshī	nánde

### 2.2.2 Set 1 in Fántǐzì

第一个是誰?	姓陳	都是這樣	小張，你好?	都是
Dì-yī ge shì shéi?	xìng Chén	dōu shì zhèiyàng	Xiǎo Zhāng, nǐ hǎo?	dōu shì
是第二个嗎?	不是。	是誰的?	我的。	小李很累。
Shì dì-èr ge ma?	Bú shì.	Shì shéi de?	Wǒ de.	Xiǎo Lǐ hěn lèi.



Hong Kong: 藥/药 yào ‘medicine’ over a pharmacy. [JKW 2004]

## Exercise 2

- 第一： 她姓毛，是女学生；今天有一点儿累。
- 第二： 他姓陈，是男学生；他有一点儿忙。
- 第三： 他姓张，是大学的老师；今天是第一天，他很忙。
- 第四： 她姓白，是小学的老师；昨天很累，可是今天好了。
- 第五： 她姓林，是中学的老师；今天没有课。
- 第六： 他姓周，是男学生；是张老师的学生。
- 第七： 他姓马，是男学生；今天有点儿饿，还没吃饭呢。
- 第八： 她姓王，女的；是老师，昨天是她的生日。
- 第九： 他姓林，男的；中文老师，还没上班。
- 第十： 她姓李，女的，学中文；中文不太难。

## Questions

1. 姓马的是男的，对吗？
2. 姓毛的是不是学生？
3. 姓周的没有老师，对不对？
4. 姓张的是小学的老师，对吗？
5. 姓白的今天很累，对吗？
6. 姓林的已经上班了，对吗？
7. 姓马的今天怎么样？
8. 今天是王老师的生日，对吗？
9. 姓张的今天怎么样？
10. 谁是学生，谁是老师？
11. 姓林的是男的还是女的？
12. 老师是不是都是男的？



## 生字 shēngzì ‘vocabulary (raw-characters)’

姓马的	xìng Mǎ de [rén] ‘the one named Ma’ ; 姓林的, etc.
小学	xiǎoxué ‘elementary school’
中学	zhōngxué ‘high school’
大学	dàxué ‘university’
生日	shēngrì ‘birthday’
还是	háishi ‘or’ [with choice questions]

## 2.3 Third set

高	緊	張	個	現	在
10+0	6+9	3+8	2+8	4+7	3+3
	紧	张	个	现	
gāo tall	6+4 jǐn tight	3+4 zhāng spread	2+1 gè individual	4+4 xiàn manifest	zài now
起	來	看	報	以	前
7+3	2+6	5+4	4+8	2+3	2+7
	来		报		
qǐ rise	1+6 lái come	kàn look	3+4 bào report	2+2 yǐ [take]	qián before; front

# 但 可 那 哪 走

2+5	3+2	3+4 / 2+4	3+7 / 3+6	7+0
dàn	kě	nà; nèi	nǎ; nǐ	zǒu
but	able	that	which	walk; leave; go

- a) 高 gāo, used as a surname, but also a SV ‘tall’; think of the graph as representing ‘a tall structure (with a flat roof and a chimney)’.
- b) 緊張/紧张. Recall the radicals: 糸 the silk radical (twisted); and 弓, representing a bow (under tension). Both suggest ‘tension or anxiety’.
- c) 个, the simplified version of 個, is an old handwriting form elevated to formal status in the new simplified set.
- d) 現 (like 班 and many other graphs) contains the element 王 as radical. Though the element is virtually identical with the surname 王 Wáng (‘king’), it actually derives from the combining form of a different character: 玉 yù ‘jade’ (found intact in the simplified 国 guó ‘country’). So traditionally, the radical is called yùzìpáng ‘jade character at the side’; but on the Mainland at least, it is also called wángzìpáng ‘king on the side’.
- e) 起 contains 走 as radical and 己 jǐ, as phonetic; cf. graphs such as 超 and 越 which are formed along the same lines. 來, originally a drawing of a kind of cereal grain, cf. 麥 mài ‘wheat’, which is now differentiated from 來 by the lower radical element. The meaning of ‘come’ may represent a metaphorical extension (grain > sprouting > coming out); or the graph may have been borrowed to represent a near homophone.
- f) 看 contains 手 ‘hand’ and 目 ‘eye’ (both of whose earlier forms suggest drawings); hence ‘hand over the eyes, looking’. 報/报 bào ‘report; newspaper’, with the right-hand component looking like ‘a comfortable armchair where you might read the paper’. (Note the vertical symmetry of the left-hand side of the traditional graph, 幸.)
- g) 以 yǐ has 人 as its radical. In the modern language, the syllable is a common ‘bound form’, occurring in words such as 可以 kěyǐ ‘can’ and 所以 suǒyǐ ‘so’; but in the classical language, it appears as a verb with the meaning of ‘take’. So 以前 ‘formerly’ is literally ‘take as before’. In the simplified set, 以 is written with 4 strokes (2+2) rather than 5.
- f) 那 nà ‘that’, with yòu’ěrdūō ‘right-ear’ (or yòu’ěrpáng) assigned as radical (cf. 都). 哪 nǎ, the question word, has kǒuzìpáng as its radical.

## 2.3.1 Compounds

不高	姓高	很紧张	但是	不紧张	可是
bù gāo	xìng Gāo	hěn jǐnzhāng	dànshi	bù jǐnzhāng	kěshi
以前	现在	在哪儿？	三个	看报	起来
yǐqián	xiànzài	zài nǎr?	sān gè	kànbào	qǐlái
她们走了。	已经走了	紧不紧张？	在这儿	陈老师	九个
Tāmen zǒu le.	yǐjīng zǒu le	Jǐn bù jǐnzhāng?	zài zhèr	Chén lǎoshī	jiǔ gè

## 2.3.2 Set 2 in fántǐzì

老師	學生	怎麼樣	學中文	都很難	那樣
lǎoshī	xuéshēng	zěnmeyàng	xué Zhōngwén	dōu hěn nán	nèi yàng
有一點兒累		也很累	張老師	這樣	不對
yǒu yídiǎnr lèi		yě hěn lèi	Zhāng lǎoshī	zhèi yàng	bú duì
不太難	男的	哪年	日文	生日	老王
bú tài nán	nán de	něi nián	Rìwén	shēngri	lǎo Wáng

## Exercise 3

Answer the questions at the end, taking your cue from the information given in the ‘chart’ below. Note that the chart takes the form of lists: ‘3 students: 1 male, 2 female’. The questions (like your responses) have the form of sentences: ‘The students are all female, right?’

- 第一： 三个学生，一个男的，两个女的；  
他们都已经起来了，可是还没看今天的报。
- 第二： 一个学生，一个老师，都是男的；  
他们以前很累，但是现在好了。
- 第三： 两个老师，一个中文老师，一个日文老师；  
他们已经下班了。

- 第四： 一个中文学生，没有老师；  
中文很难，他很累。
- 第五： 四个学生，都很紧张；  
都是陈老师的学生。
- 第六： 五个学生，两个老师；  
学生很紧张，老师很忙。
- 第七： 一个男的，一个女的；  
男的起来了还没吃饭呢；女的已经走了。
- 第八： 两个学生，一个对，一个不对；  
一个是 MIT 的，一个不是。
- 第九： 两个学生，一个姓张，一个姓高。  
姓张的很紧张，可是姓高的还好。
- 第十： 十个学生，都是张老师的学生。  
张老师的学生很忙也很累。

### Questions

1. 第六个，学生，老师都很紧张吗？
2. 第二个，他们还是很累吗？
3. 第三个，那两个老师是中文老师吗？他们下班了没有？
4. 第八个，谁对，谁不对？
5. 第四个，学中文，没有老师，难不难？
6. 第十个，谁的学生都很忙很累？
7. 第五个，那四个学生怎么样？
8. 第一个，学生都是女的，对吗？今天的报看了，但是昨天的还没看，对不对？

9. 第七个，他们两个已经走了，对吗？已经上课了。
10. 第九个，姓陈的是学生但是姓张的不是，是老师，对吗？

## 2.4 Fourth set

(甚)麼	東西	手機
5+4      3+11	4+4      6+0	4+0      4+12
什 么	东	机
2+2      1+2	1+4	4+2
shénme what	dōng east	xī west
		shǒu hand
		jī machine

書包	筆	車子	傘	貴
4+6      2+3	6+6	7+0      3+0	2+10	7+5
书	笔	车	伞	贵
1+3	6+4	4+0	2+4	4+5
shū	bāo	chē	zǐ	sǎn
book	pack; bundle	vehicle	(child)	umbrella
	writing implement		with nouns	expensive; worthy

字典	行	您
3+3      2+6	6+0	4+7
zì	xíng	nín
character	walk; go; be okay	you [POL]
records		

a) Simplification is not a new process; it has been going on since the creation of the writing system. It continues even in the traditional set. The first character of 什麼, for example, is an older simplification of 甚 that substitutes the phonetically close 十 for the more complicated original, then marks it with rénzipáng. The 台 of 台北 is another substitution that has gained currency in the traditional font as an alternative for original 臺. Both simplifications have a long history, and have now gained acceptance in Taiwan and traditional communities. Both can now be used in the traditional set.

b) East, in its traditional form (東) shows ‘dawn in the east, with the sun (日) coming up through the trees (木)’. The characters, 東西/东西, suggest that the compound is derived from ‘east-west’, ie the plane of existence, ‘where all things are’. 東 was employed as a phonetic element in 陳, and the relationship remains in the simplified forms: 东/陈.

c) 手 ‘hand’, itself a radical (with a pictographic origin), has a rather different combining form, seen on the left of characters such as 報, 把, 拉, 押. The traditional version of the two graphs (機/机), with its complicated right-hand element, is more suggestive of the meaning ‘machine’. (Cf. 飛機/飞机 feījī ‘airplane’.)

d) 書 consists of 聿 yù ‘a writing implement’ and 日, the latter, distinct from 日. In 筆, 聿 is determined by the element at the top, the bamboo radical (a combining version of 竹 zhú ‘bamboo’); early writing implements were made out of bamboo. 包, whose root meaning is ‘to wrap’ or ‘a bundle’, looks quite like a bundle.

e) *The rule of 5*: characters like 書 (or 筆 bǐ ‘writing implement’ that also contains 聿), which exhibit many horizontal layers are sometimes difficult to resolve. Fortunately, for many such graphs, the RULE OF 5 applies. The rule of 5 states that if the character seems to have a lot of horizontal levels, it has five! Boxes count as one layer; boxes with an internal horizontal (日) count as 2, etc. 書 (as well as 聿, 筆) is an example; so is the left-hand side of nán 難 (the top counts for 2, the box 1 and the lower horizontals, another 2, for a total of 5).

f) The traditional form 車, originally a drawing from overhead of a cart, is itself a radical (appearing in characters such as 輪, 輛, 軟). The graph 子 zǐ (distinct from 字 zì ‘written character’) was originally a drawing of a child. If fully toned, it generally means ‘young; child of; seed of’: 王子 wángzǐ ‘prince (king’s son)’, 天子 tiānzǐ ‘emperor (son of heaven)’, 松子 sōngzǐ ‘pine nut (child of pine)’, 蝦子 xiāzǐ ‘shrimp roe (child of shrimp)’. However, in its untuned form, 子 acts as a noun suffix, appearing with nouns that refer to things from everyday life: 桌子 zhuōzi ‘table’; 椅子 yǐzi ‘chair’; 鼻子 bízi ‘nose’; 板子 bǎnzi ‘spanner; wrench’.

g) 傘/伞 look like umbrellas.

h) 貴/贵 guì ‘expensive’ introduces the important element 貝/贝 bèi, a graph that is said to originate as a drawing of a cowrie shell, used as currency along the southwest coast of China in ancient times. 貝/贝 appears as radical in characters for many word involving transactions, such as 買 mǎi ‘buy’, 賣 mài ‘sell’ and 寶 bǎo ‘valuable’.

i) 字 zì ‘characters’ (‘a child, 子, under a roof, studying characters’). 典 is said to be composed of 冊 ‘classic books’ on a stand, suggesting ‘a repository of information’.

j) 行 is its own radical (said to have originated as a picture of crossroads). It generally combines with other elements placed internally, eg 街, 衍. The core meaning of xíng is ‘street; walk’, or by extension, ‘to work (of machines)’, ‘be okay’ etc. The same graph is also used for háng ‘row’, and by extension (via things that are arranged in rows), ‘firm; business’, eg 銀行 yínháng ‘bank (silver-business)’. The word has entered English historical writing, from Cantonese, as *hong*, meaning ‘factory; warehouse’.

### 2.4.1 Compounds

我的傘	她的書	你的筆	手機	書包	什麼
wǒ de sǎn	tā de shū	nǐ de bǐ	shǒujī	shūbāo	shénme
東西	車子	字典	行李	您好	行嗎
dōngxi	chēzi	zìdiǎn	xíngli	Nín hǎo.	Xíng ma?
誰的書?	沒有筆.	上車	貴姓?	不太貴	東西
Shéi de shū?	Méiyǒu bǐ.	shàngchē	Guìxìng?	bú tài guì	dōngxi
什麼東西	很貴	車子	姓李	手機不貴	沒筆
shénme dōngxi	hěn guì	chēzi	xìng Lǐ	shǒujī bú guì	méi bǐ
很緊張	可是	三個	現在	起來了	走了
hěn jǐnzhāng	kěshì	sān ge	xiànzài	qǐlái le	zǒu le
已經看報了		高老師	現在好了.	還沒起來	不對
yǐjīng kànbào le		Gāo lǎoshī	Xiànzài hǎo le.	hái méi qǐlái	bú duì

## 2.4.2 Set 3 in fántǐzì

看報	以前	現在	在這兒	在報上	起來
kànbào	yǐqián	xiànzài	zài zhèr	zài bào shàng	qǐlái
可是	不對	老高的	緊張	還可以	但是
kěshì	bú duì	lǎo Gāo de	jǐnzhāng	hái kěyǐ	dànshì
三個學生	那樣	在我這兒	走了	昨天的報	不高
sān ge xuéshēng	nèi yàng	zài wǒ zhèr	zǒu le	zuótiān de bào	bù gāo

## 2.4.3 Readings

## a) A Narrative (fántǐzì) with questions

王明是中文老師，有十二個學生。他們已經上課了。中文很難，但是學生都好，都行。今天九月一日，上學第一天。老師學生都很緊張，很忙，也很累。那兒有個學生姓陳，男的。小陳的中文很好。他也是王老師的學生。他今天沒有飯吃，很餓。很餓，上課，不行，對嗎？

## Questions

1. 王明是學生嗎？
2. 老師有二十個學生，對嗎？
3. 他們上班了嗎？
4. 中文怎麼樣？
5. 王老師的學生怎麼樣？
6. 學生緊張嗎？
7. 姓陳的是男的嗎？
8. 小陳的中文怎麼樣？
9. 他是誰的學生？
10. 不吃飯，上課，行不行？



**b) A Dialogue**小马

小张，你好。

很累，你呢？

我呢，不饿，我已经吃了。

还行。好，那，我走了。

不，今天没课。

明天见。小张

小马，你好。今天怎么样？

我今天也有点儿累-- 我没吃饭。你呢？你饿不饿？

好吃吗？

上课去 (qù 'go') 吗？

好，那，明天见吧。**Exercise 4.**

Answer the questions below by checking the information in the following table:

第一	手机	高老师的	有一点贵
第二	毛笔	学生的	不太贵
第三	小车子	大学的	有一点儿贵
第四	书包	小李的	不贵
第五	中文字典	周老师的	不贵
第六	伞	李明的	好看，可是不贵
第七	书	小毛的	不贵

**Questions**

1. 第一是什么东西？
2. 第一是谁的？
3. 毛笔贵不贵？
4. 学生有毛笔吗？
5. 小车子很贵，对不对？
6. 小李的东西是什么？
7. 周老师有什么样的字典？
8. 李明的伞怎么样？
9. 有书的姓什么？
10. 您贵姓？你是不是学生？

## 2.5 Form of characters

Traditionally, Chinese characters are subdivided into six categories according to the way they are thought to have been formed. These categories are called the 六書 liù shū ‘six scripts’, and include graphs that are derived from drawings (like 馬 mǎ ‘horse’ the earliest versions of which look quite like a horse), those that are formed as indications (like 上 and 下, which represent meaning diagrammatically), or those that are borrowed (like the graph 不 which was borrowed to represent a word of nearly identical sound, like 4 in the shorthand 4U).

Though the ‘six scripts’ are sometimes claimed to be descriptive, in fact it requires considerable historical knowledge to decide to which type a graph belongs. For the beginner, seeking a way to gain a foothold on the sheer face of the [written] language by trying to rationalize the relationship between the sound/meaning of a word and the form of its character, there are only two useful kinds of relationship. One is pictorial, or representational: the shape of the character suggests its meaning; 上 ‘on’, 下 ‘under’, 中 ‘middle’, 心 ‘heart’. The other is relational: the character resembles another of the same or similar sound: 嗎 mā ‘Q’, sounds like 馬 mǎ ‘horse’ and 媽 mā ‘mother’. These two types can be labeled ‘representational’ and ‘phonosemantic’, respectively. The former are often cited for their pictorial qualities; but it is the latter, the phonosemantic, that are the most common. New characters are almost always created on the phonosemantic model.

### 2.5.1 Representational characters

As noted earlier, compound characters are those that can be decomposed into constituents that are themselves characters (or combining versions of characters). Non-compound characters, such as 中, 馬 or 王 (or the parts of compound characters such as 女, 生, 木 and 日) can be called ‘simplex’. It is probably true that most simplex characters derive ultimately from drawings or indications that relate to the original meaning of the graph. The following characters all have forms that can be rationalized fairly easily in terms of their meaning:

一	二	三	上	下	中	心	必	火	雨
yī	èr	sān	shàng	xià	zhōng	xīn	bì	huǒ	yǔ
one	two	three	on	below	middle	heart	must	fire	rain
米	木	月	山	凸	叉	弓	鱼/魚	鸟/鳥	伞/傘
mǐ	mù	yuè	shān	tǔ	chā	gōng	yú	niǎo	sǎn
rice	(tree) wood	moon	hill	convex	fork	bow	fish	bird	umbrella

A particular graph can be viewed as representational regardless of whether the historical data supports the notion. Thus, if you agree that 伞/傘 sǎn looks [vaguely] like an umbrella, then you are regarding the graphs as representational, and that image can help you to remember them. Similarly, once the graph for xīn ‘heart’ is known, ie 心,

then 必 bì ‘must; have to’ can be viewed as representing the notion of obligation as ‘a line crossing the heart’. Conversely, the pictorial origins of some graphs may have been obscured by historical change. The graph 象 used for xiàng ‘elephant’ may not look like an elephant until someone makes the case either by citing a more realistic earlier graph, or by drawing attention to a trunk, head, body, tail, in the modern character.

Beginning students show great skill at creating nonsense etymologies (even for compound characters). Thus the character 哭 kū ‘to cry’ is seen as ‘two eyes and a tear’; or 電/电 diàn ‘electricity’ is seen as ‘an appliance with an electrical cord running out the bottom’. Or – to cite a more extreme case – 會 (会 in simplified form) ‘to be able; capable’ (among other meanings) is seen as Darth Vader, complete with helmet and breathing equipment – a man of impressive *capabilities*. But while it is useful to find representational elements in complex characters, it is often not possible even with a high degree of creative license. There is not much to be said for, say, 皮 pí ‘skin’, 衣 yī ‘clothes’, or 豆 dòu ‘beans’. They are simplex (and may well derive directly from representations) but their forms are difficult to account for without historical research – or a very creative imagination.

### 2.5.2 Additive characters – or blends

A small set of compound graphs can be interpreted as semantic blends, in which the meaning of the whole seems to be related to both its parts. Occasionally, as in the (b) examples, both meaning and sound are involved.

#### a) Semantic blends

尖 jiān ‘sharp’, made up of 小 xiǎo ‘small’ and 大 dà ‘big’, ie ‘wedge shaped’;

忠 zhōng ‘loyal’, made up of 中 zhōng ‘middle’ and 心 xīn ‘heart’;

信 xìn ‘believe; letter’, made up of 人 rén ‘person’ and 言 yǔ ‘language’;

孕 yùn ‘be pregnant’, made up of 乃 nǎi ‘exist’ and 子 zǐ ‘child’;

好 hǎo ‘be good; well’, made up of 女 nǚ ‘woman’ and 子 zǐ ‘child’, ie ‘goodness’

尿 niào ‘urine’ made up of 尸 shī ‘body’ and 水 shuǐ ‘water’;

屎 shǐ ‘shit’ made up of 尸 shī ‘body’ and 米 mǐ ‘rice [grain]’.

#### b) Blends of sound and meaning (rare)

甬 béng ‘no need to’, made up of 不 bú ‘not’ and 用 yòng ‘use’.

乒乓 pīngpāng ‘pingpong’, whose graphs suggest a pingpong table, but which also take their sound from the graph, 兵 bīng ‘soldier’.

Blends are one of the traditional character types (one of the *liùshū*), but most cases represent more of an apparent than a real historical process of character creation. As with the simplex characters, students and teachers frequently ignore the historical facts and enlarge the category of blends with their own etymologies: 名 *míng* ‘name’ from 夕 *xī* ‘evening’ and 口 *kǒu* ‘mouth’, explained as ‘at dusk, you have to call out names to identify people’; or 東 *dōng* ‘east’, made up of 日 *rì* ‘sun’ superimposed on 木 *mù* ‘wood’ (originally ‘tree’) and explained as ‘sunrise through the eastern trees’; or 杯 *bēi* ‘cup’, made up of 木 *mù* ‘wood’ and 不 *bù* ‘not’, because ‘cups aren’t made of wood’.

### 2.5.3 Phonosemantic characters

Once the repertoire of characters begins to grow, it becomes more effective to relate characters not to things (their referents), but to each other. Thus, as noted earlier, once 馬 *mǎ* ‘horse’ is learned, then it is easy to relate it to 嗎 *mā* ‘Q’, or 媽 *mā* ‘mother’ – or eventually to 螞 *mǎ* ‘ant’ and 碼 *mǎ* ‘number’. The historical process that gives rise to such ‘phonetic sets’ is borrowing followed by specification: 馬 is borrowed to write words similar in sound (mother, ant, number, etc.); then to prevent confusion, the graph is specified by the addition of a classifying character (口, 女, 石 or 虫, etc.)

Many phonetic sets are quite regular, like the 馬 set, or the following set based on 青 *qīng* (which, as a free form, means ‘green’ or ‘young’):

請	情	晴	清	氫	蜻	鯖
qǐng	qíng	qíng	qīng	qíng	qīng	qīng
invite	feelings	clear	clean	hydrogen	dragonfly	mackerel

In some cases, phonetic correspondences that were once regular have been obscured by historical changes in the language; such is the case for 饿 and 我, or 陳 and 東, where the pronunciation of members of the set (*è* and *wǒ*, in the first case, *chén* and *dōng* in the second) remains close but no longer identical. But even the ‘irregular’ sets show patterns of correspondence, as illustrated by the set based on 重 below, which either begins with *zh* or with *d* (initials that differ only slightly in their place of articulation).

重	種	踵	腫	動	懂	董
zhòng	zhǒng	zhǒng	zhǒng	dòng	dǒng	dǒng
heavy	category	heel	swell	move	understand	to lead

The common sound elements, the *phonetics*, are called *shēngpáng* in Chinese; the specifying elements, the *radicals* are *bùshǒu*. As shown at the beginning of this lesson, radicals do have concrete meanings (言 ‘speech’, 心 ‘heart’, 日 ‘sun’, 水 ‘water’ etc.), and initially the selection of a particular radical to form a compound character would have been inspired by meaning. But in many cases, the original impetus has been obscured by linguistic and cultural change. The presence of the water radical in 海 ‘sea’,

河 ‘river’ and 洗 ‘wash’ reflects a connection with water; but its presence in 漢 Hàn ‘Chinese’, 溫 wēn ‘warm’ and 活 huó ‘to live’ is harder to explain. Ultimately, the function of radicals in compound characters is one of differentiation (活 is not 适 or 括; 漢 is not 難, 嘆 or 艱); and classification (活 and 漢 are found under the water radical).

#### 2.5.4 Character retrieval

Alphabetic writing systems, regardless of the regularity of their spelling, make use of relatively few symbols, so ordering titles in filing systems or words in dictionaries is a matter of alphabetization – establishing an order for the symbols and remembering it. For character writing systems, in which the number of symbols ranges in the thousands, retrieval is much more problematical.

The most common method of ordering characters (and ultimately, retrieving them) was suggested by the large number of compound characters that arose from processes of borrowing and specification described above. Compound characters could be grouped by radical, and then subgrouped by number of additional strokes (the second of the figures written under each large-format characters introduced in the sets of characters in each lesson). Thus 請 could be found under the speech-radical, 言, amongst those characters with 8 (additional) strokes; 蜻 would be under the insect-radical, 虫, 8 strokes, etc. Simplex characters that were themselves radicals (such as 言, 日, 气, 魚) would be listed at the head of their own set. Other simplex characters were brought into the same system by designating parts of their graphs – sometimes rather arbitrarily – to be radicals. Thus 中, 北, 甲 (all simplex) are assigned the radical | (the vertical stroke called shù); 也 is assigned the radical 乙 (even though the character does not contain a stroke of that shape); 元 is assigned 儿, and so on.

Eventually, by *Qing* times, with the publication of the great Kangxi dictionary, the number of radicals was settled at 214, ordered by numbers of strokes in each. Students of the language, like literate Chinese, who had to be able to look up characters efficiently or search through indexes ordered by radical, came to know the radical chart virtually by heart. Because of their important classificatory role, and because they are stable (each character having one radical assigned to it) and of fixed number, introductory textbooks have tended to focus on radicals (noting general meanings where possible) rather than phonetic sets. Yet both are useful, and in fact, the information on pronunciation obtained from phonetic elements is probably more useful to the learner (in allowing dictionary searches by pronunciation, for example) than the information on meaning provided by radicals, which is often too general to be of much use.

The radical system of retrieval is not the only one in use, but it remains one of the more popular systems for looking up characters in dictionaries or other reference works in cases where the pronunciation is not known. Adoption of the simplified set of characters was accompanied by some changes in the assignment of radicals, and altered the arrangement and number of radicals in the chart. The new system has 189 rather than the traditional 214.

The main difficulty in using the radical system is identifying the radical – particularly in simplex characters which are not themselves radicals and which were assigned a radical to make them conform to the system. Nowadays, most dictionaries are organized alphabetically by the *pinyin* pronunciation of the first character, but they also contain lists organized by radicals that allow a user to look up characters when the pronunciation is unknown. Only one dictionary, *The ABC Chinese-English Dictionary* (cited in the bibliography) is organized by pinyin and word (rather than character), so that words are ordered uniquely, irrespective of the particular character of the first syllable.

### 2.5.5 An illustration

The couplet pictured on the next page was observed on a shop door in the city of *Zhenjiang*, not far downstream from *Nanjing*. It provides some good examples of phonosemantic characters. Despite being a product of the Mainland, the ‘scroll’ reads vertically in the traditional fashion, right to left, ie Jùn jì ào chí, etc. Each character contains the now familiar element 馬, but this time, not as a phonetic, but as a radical, so that the set of characters shows no particular commonality of sound. Rather, they all refer to types of horses or to attributes of horses.

The word-for-word glosses below are only very rough indications of meaning. Each set of 4 characters in a column forms a sentence consisting of an adjective and a noun, followed by an adverb and a verb. The sense is one of aspiration and hope.

	↓		↓		↓	
驤	駿	xiāng	Jùn	<i>Adj</i>	galloping	Outstanding
駒	驥	jū	jì	<i>N</i>	foal	fleet+horse
驩	驚	huān	ào	<i>Adv</i>	joyously	proudly
騰	馳	téng	chí	<i>V</i>	soars.	races,

The saying is not a well known one; in fact, though they would get the gist of the meaning, many Chinese would be hard pressed to say precisely what the difference was between a jì and a jū, (the second characters of each [vertical] line).

Chinese encountering rare characters such as [some of] those in the couplet, are quite likely to make use of radical and phonetic to remind them of meaning and pronunciation, respectively. Students of the language need the hints even more. With some allowance for 馳 which needs to be referred to other compounds (池 chí, 弛 chí) rather than just the right-hand element (也 yě), the pronunciation of the phonetic element alone matches that of the compound (except in tone). Thus 驥 and 冀 are both pronounced jì; 驚 is ào, 教 is áo, 驤 and 襄 are both xiāng, etc.



Front door, Zhènjiāng, near Nánjīng. [JKW 1996]

## 2.6 Miscellany:

### 2.6.1 Tone sets

#### a) Jiǎntǐzì

老师 很好 再见 不热 很忙 不高

紧张 还好 看报 不累 很难 上课

#### Fántǐzì

緊張 還好 看報 不餓 很難 上課

老師 很好 再見 不熱 很忙 不高

b)	甲	乙	丙	丁
	不忙	很好	不太累	忙吗？
	不饿	很累	不太好	紧张吗？
	不累	很忙	不太忙	饿吗
	不紧张	很高	不太高	好吗
	不高	很饿	不太饿	累吗

### 2.6.2 Set 4 characters in fántǐzì

沒有傘	沒有筆	還沒起來	書包	她的書	什麼
méiyǒu sǎn	méiyǒu bǐ	hái méi qǐlái	shūbāo	tā de shū	shénme
上車	字典	東西很貴	您好！貴姓？	手機	
shàngchē	zìdiǎn	dōngxi hěn guì.	Nín hǎo! Guìxìng?	shǒujī	
那不行。	字典很貴	你的行李呢？	在這兒。	看書	
Nà bù xíng.	zìdiǎn hěn guì	Nǐ de xíngli ne?	Zài zhèr.	kànshū	



Lucky poster. [JKW 2006]



## 2.7 On the street #2

歡迎光臨

欢迎光临

huānyíng guānglín  
welcome bright-presence  
Welcome [to you our] guests.

公話

公话

gōnghuà  
public+speech  
public phone

推

拉

tuī lā  
push pull  
[written on doors]

空車 / 空车

kōngchē  
empty-vehicle  
[on taxis]

## Notes

- a) The formal expression for welcoming customers huānyíng guānglín, or thanking them xièxie guānglín, is often written at the entrances of shops (eg on entrance doors, on walls, on floors).
- b) Pay phones in China (at least up until the current year of 2005) can be found on the street or in other public places. While they do accept coins, most customers make use of one of the many brands of phone cards that can be brought from newspaper stands and small shops (at about 30 – 50% or more below face value). However, many people prefer using the ordinary telephones that small shops make available for public use. These are announced by small signs with 公話 written on them. Normally, before making your call, you let the shopkeeper know the type of call (shì nèi ‘within the city’, shì wài ‘out of the city’ or guó jì ‘international’ – though the last are not always possible from shop phones). You are charged afterwards; fees are usually very modest.
- c) 推 and 拉 contain the ‘hand-radical’, a combining version of 手, called tíshǒupáng ‘raise-hand-beside’. It is associated with words having to do with manipulation.




## Stroke Order of Characters in Lesson 2

The number before each stroke indicates where the stroke starts as well as the stroke order.

		
shì	nán	de
		
nǚ	dì	xiǎo
		
mǎ (T)	mǎ (S)	dōu

## MIT 中文 I

## Lesson 2

		
chén (F)	shéi/shuí (F)	zhāng (F)
		
chén (S)	shéi/shuí (S)	zhāng (S)
		
zhè/zhèi (T)	xué (T)	shēng
		
zhè/zhèi (S)	xué (S)	lǎo

## MIT 中文 I




## Lesson 2

shī (T)	diǎn (T)	ér/~r (T)
shī (S)	diǎn (S)	ér/~r (S)
zěn	me (T)	yàng (T)
gāo	me (S)	yàng (S)

zhōng	duì (T)	nán (T)
wén	duì (S)	nán (S)
jǐn (T)	gè/ge (T)	gè/ge
jǐn (S)	yǐ	qián

## MIT 中文 I



## Lesson 2

		
xiàn (T)	xiàn (S)	zài
		
kàn	bào (T)	bào (S)
		
nà/nèi	dàn	kě
		
nǎ/něi	shén (T)	shén (S)

		
dōng (T)	dōng (S)	xī
		
shǒu	jī (T)	jī (S)
		
shū (T)	shū (S)	bāo
		
bǐ (T)	bǐ (S)	zǒu

		
chē (T)	sǎn (T)	guì (T)
		
chē (S)	sǎn (S)	guì (S)
		
zǐ/zi	zì	diǎn
		
qǐ3	lái2 (T)	lái2 (S)



 <p>Diagram showing the stroke order for the character 行 (xíng/háng). The character is composed of two main parts: a left radical (彳) and a right component (亍). The left radical is formed by three strokes: a vertical line (1), a short horizontal line (2), and a longer horizontal line (3). The right component is formed by four strokes: a horizontal line (4), a vertical line (5), a horizontal line (6), and a vertical line (7).</p>	 <p>Diagram showing the stroke order for the character 您 (nín). The character is composed of two main parts: a left radical (亻) and a right component (您). The left radical is formed by two strokes: a vertical line (1) and a short horizontal line (2). The right component is formed by nine strokes: a horizontal line (3), a vertical line (4), a horizontal line (5), a vertical line (6), a horizontal line (7), a vertical line (8), a horizontal line (9), a vertical line (10), and a horizontal line (11).</p>	
xíng/háng	nín	

## Unit 3

Zǐ yuē:            Xué ér shí xī zhī,            bú yì yuè hū?  
 Master said:    study and timely review it, not also pleasing Q.  
*The Master said, 'To learn and in due time rehearse it: is this not also pleasurable?'*

Opening lines of the *Analects* of Confucius.  
 (Brooks and Brooks translation) Classical Chinese

### Contents

3.1 Pronunciation	
3.2 Amount	
3.3 Nationality	
3.4 The Cardinal Directions: NSEW	<i>Exercise 1</i>
3.5 Yes and no	<i>Exercise 2</i>
3.6 Thanks and sorry	<i>Exercise 3</i>
3.7 Things to drink	<i>Exercise 4</i>
3.8 Why, because, so	<i>Exercise 5</i>
3.9 Money	<i>Exercises 6,7</i>
3.10 Other numbered sets	<i>Exercise 8</i>
3.11 Courses and classes	<i>Exercise 9</i>
3.12 Dialogue: courses and classes	<i>Exercise 10</i>
3.13 Sounds and pinyin	<i>Exercise 11</i>
3.14 Summary	<i>Exercise 12</i>
3.15 Rhymes and rhythms	
<i>Appendix: Cities, countries and nationalities</i>	

### 3.1 Pronunciation: initials of rows 3 and 4

The *sounds* symbolized as z and c in pinyin (in row-3 of the initial chart) can be problematical for speakers of English, since they do not appear in initial position in English words. The word 'tsunami' for example, though represented in English dictionaries with the foreign 'ts' sound, is often anglicized as 'tunami' or 'sunami' by English speakers. [*Tsunami* is a Japanese word, written with characters whose Chinese meanings are 'shallows' and 'wave'; the Chinese word is hǎixiào 'sea roar'.]

The row-4 initials, the retroflex consonants pronounced with the tongue tip raised [!], also present difficulties, not just for English speakers, but for the many Chinese in southern regions (including Taiwan) who, in colloquial speech, pronounce zh, ch and sh as z, c, and s, respectively. [Standard] Mandarin is unique to the region in having both the dental (row-3) and retroflex (row 4) series. Speakers of regional Chinese languages such as Cantonese and Hakka, or those who speak Southeast Asian languages such as Thai and Vietnamese usually have one or other of the series, but not both.

The following sets, then, focus on lines 3 and 4 of the initial consonant sounds. Read them across, assigning a single tone; ! reminds you to raise the tip of your tongue.

1. cu > tu > ch!u > su > zu > du > zh!u
2. ta > ca > sa > ch!a > sh!a
3. zh!e > de > ze > ce > te > ch!e > se
4. duo > zuo > zh!uo > tuo > cuo > ch!uo > suo > sh!uo
5. tou > cou > ch!ou > zh!ou > zou > dou > sou > sh!ou

## 3.2 Amount

### 3.2.1 Larger numbers

As you know, numbers in Chinese are well behaved: 11 is 10-1, 12 is 10-2; 20 is 2-10 and 30, 3-10; 41 is 4-10-1, etc. Higher numbers, also quite regular, are based on bǎi ‘100’, qiān ‘1000’ and wàn ‘10,000’.

sānshí	sìshísān	jiǔshíjiǔ	yìbǎi	30	43	99	100
yìbǎi wǔshísān	bābǎi sānshí			153		830	
yìqiān	yíwàn	yìbǎiwàn		1000	10,000	1 million	

#### Notes

- a) Notice the use of the apostrophe to clarify syllable boundaries in those cases where a final vowel of one syllable meets an initial vowel of another: shí'èr. In large numbers, pinyin conventions write spaces between numbers built around a particular multiple of ten, eg: yìbǎi bāshíbā ‘188’.
- b) You will have more need to use large numbers when the subject is population, as in §8.3. In Chinese, there is a root for 10,000 (wàn), but not for a million; the latter is based on wàn: liǎngbǎiwàn ‘2 million’ (ie 200 x 10,000).

### 3.2.2 Some more measure phrases

Drinks can be measured with bēi ‘cup; glass’ or píng ‘bottle’. Cups, bēizi, on the other hand, and bottles píngzi, are measured with gè. Books are measured with běn ‘stem; binding’. Vehicles, including bicycles, are measured with liàng (falling tone); however, in Taiwan Mandarin, bicycles are often measured with jià ‘frame’.

yì bēi chá <i>a cup of tea</i>	liǎng bēi kāfēi <i>2 cups of coffee</i>	sān bēi qìshuǐ <i>3 glasses of soda</i>	sì bēi <i>4 cups [of...]</i>
yì píng píjiǔ <i>a bottle of beer</i>	liǎng píng kělè <i>2 bottles of cola</i>	sì píng jiǔ <i>4 bottles of wine</i>	sān píng <i>3 bottles [of...]</i>
yí ge bēizi <i>1 item cup</i>	liǎng ge píngzi <i>2 items bottle</i>	sān ge bēizi <i>3 items cup</i>	sì ge <i>4 [of them]</i>

yì běn shū a book	liǎng běn zìdiǎn 2 dictionaries	sān běn shū 3 books	shí běn 10 [of them]
yí liàng chēzi a car	liǎng liàng qìchē 2 automobiles	yí liàng zìxíngchē a bike	sān jià dānchē 3 bikes [Taiwan]

### 3.3 Nationality

#### 3.3.1 Country names

Zhōngguó	Rìběn	Yīnní	Yīndù	Hánguó
Àodàliya	Jiānádà	Měiguó	Mòxīgē	Éguó
Fǎguó	Yīngguó	Déguó	Yìdàlì	Xībānyá

Some country names – mostly those with a history of independence and national power – are composed of a single syllable plus guó ‘country; nation’, on the model of Zhōngguó ‘China (middle-country)’. For these countries, the first syllable is chosen for its sound as well as meaning: Měiguó ‘the USA (beautiful-country)’; Yīngguó ‘England; Britain (hero-country)’; Fǎguó ‘France (law-country)’; Déguó ‘Germany (virtue-country)’; Tàiguó ‘Thailand (peace-country)’.

Countries with deep historical ties to China retain their old names. Nippon, a name that is cognate with the English name Japan, is the source of the Chinese name, Rìběn, literally ‘sun-root’, ie from the Chinese perspective, the direction of the sunrise. Vietnam, a name that contains the Chinese root nán ‘south’ and the name of an ethnic group called Yuè in Chinese, is Yuènnán in Mandarin. Most other countries are simply transliterated: Jiānádà, Yìdàlì, Fēilǚbīn, Yīndù. City names, except for those in Japan and Korea, are almost all transliterated: Zhījiāgē, Bèi’érfāsītè, Tèlāwéifū. A few are translated rather than transliterated, eg Salt Lake City, Yánhúchéng ‘salt-lake-city’. A more extensive list of country and city names, with English equivalents, is provided in the appendix to this unit.

#### 3.3.2 Asking about nationality

rén ‘person’	-guó ‘country’	dìfang ‘place’
Zhōngguó rén ‘a Chinese’	Zhōngguó ‘China’	shénme dìfang ‘what place’

There are several ways of asking about nationality, all of them involving the categorial verb shì. Recall that nǎ and něi represent the same word, as do nà and nèi; the first members of each pair (nǎ, nà) *tend to be* ‘free’ forms; the second (něi, nèi) *tend to be* bound to measures: nǎ but něi ge.

- i) Nǐ shì něiguó [~ nǎguó] rén?      (‘you be which-country person’)
- ii) Nǐ shì nǎr ~ nǎlǐ de <rén>?      (‘you be where DE person’)

iii) Nǐ shì shénme dìfang rén? ('you be what place person')

iv) Nǐ shì <cóng> shénme dìfang lái de? ('you be from what place come one')

Options (ii- iv) do not, strictly speaking, ask about nationality, but about place, and can be answered with a city or town, as well as a country name. The last, (iv) represents two options: with cóng [ts-] 'from', the question is, strictly speaking, about the country of residence – or by implication, where you were born. Without cóng, it could simply mean 'where do you [happen to have] come from'.

The responses to the questions usually take the same form as the question, eg:

Nǐ shì < cóng > shénme dìfang lái de? Where are you from?  
 Wǒ shì <cóng> Ribēn lái de. I'm from Japan.

Nǐ shì něiguó rén? Which country are you from?  
 Wǒ shì Hánguó rén. I'm from Korea.

Occasionally in conversation, people will ask about nationality using the more formal word, guójí 'nationality':

Nǐ de guójí shì shénme? What's your nationality?  
 Wǒ shì Měiguó guójí. I'm an American citizen.

Nǐ shì shénme guójí? What's your nationality?  
 Wǒ de guójí shì Jiānádà. My nationality is Canadian.  
 or Wǒ shì Jiānádà rén. I'm from Canada.

### 3.3.3 Foreigners

'Foreign' in Chinese is wàiguó 'outside-country'; 'foreigners' are wàiguó rén. Foreigners are also called yáng rén. Yáng actually means 'seas', but with implications of 'overseas'; cf. words such as yángwáwa 'a doll [with European features]' or the now archaic yáng huǒ 'matches ([over]seas fire)'.

In China, foreigners of European ancestry are generally called lǎowài 'venerable foreigners': Ei, nǐ kàn, lǎowài lái le 'Hey, look, here comes the foreigner!' In southern China, local equivalents of the Cantonese term, *guailo* 'ghost people' (incorporated in regional Mandarin as guǐlǎo) is used much like lǎowài. The presence of the rather respectable prefix lǎo makes both terms acceptable. Yáng guǐzi 'foreign devils', however, is regarded as rather disparaging; one recent and widely used Chinese-to-Chinese dictionary gives its definition as [translated] 'an archaic term of disparagement for Westerners who invaded our country'. So even though one may occasionally use it tongue-in-cheek to refer to oneself, generally, it is better to avoid it.

### 3.3.4 Have you been there? V-guo

Talking about nationality or place of origin is likely to lead to questions about prior travel, so it is worthwhile taking a short digression to introduce the basics of the verb suffix guò [usually untuned] prior to a more detailed exposition in a later unit. Here we concentrate on two exchanges, the first involving the verb qù ‘go’, and the second involving the verb chī ‘eat’:

	Nǐ qù-guo Zhōngguó ma?	Have you [ever] been to China?
+	Qù-guo.	[I] have.
–	Méi<you> qù-guo.	[I] haven’t.
	Nǐ chī-guo hǎishēn ma?	Have you [ever] eaten sea cucumber?
+	Chī-guo.	I have.
–	Méi<you> chī-guo.	No, I haven’t.

Note that responses to questions with guò retain the guò in negative responses as well as positive. The negative response, like that with le, is formed with méi<you>.

‘Experiential’ guò should remind you of a construction that you encountered in Unit 1. There you learned several ways to ask if someone had had their meal, one way involving final le, and another that involved both le and the post-verbal guò: Nǐ chīguo fàn le ma? / Chī<guo> le. ‘Have you had your meal? / I have.’ Clearly the question does not mean ‘have you *ever* eaten’, along the lines of: Nǐ chī-guo hǎishēn ma? ‘Have you [ever] eaten sea cucumber?’

In this book, the two uses of guò are kept distinct by a convention not found in standard pinyin: the guò from Unit 1, that co-occurs with le, follows the verb directly (chīguo); the one introduced in this lesson, not associated with le and meaning ‘have ever done something’, follows the verb with a hyphen (chī-guo). In fact, even without this signal, context resolves most cases of potential ambiguity, just as it does in English with, eg ‘Have you eaten sea-cucumber?’ and ‘Have you eaten?’.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Nǐ shì Zhōngguó shénme dìfāng lái de?<br>Wǒ shì Xī’ān rén.<br>Xī’ān, wǒ qù-guo Xī’ān. Xī’ān hěn yǒumíng!<br>Shì ma?                                   | Whereabouts in China are you from?<br>I’m from Xi’an.<br>Xi’an, I’ve been there. Xi’an’s famous!<br>Is it?  |
| 2 | Nǐ shì Měiguó rén ba?<br>Bù, wǒ shì Jiānádà rén.<br><Nǐ shì> Jiānádà shénme dìfāng rén?<br>Wēngēhuá. Nǐ qù-guo ma?<br>Méi qù-guo, kěshì hěn xiǎng qù. | I take it you’re American.<br>No, I’m from Canada.<br>Whereabouts in Canada [are you from]?<br>Vancouver. Have you been?<br>No, but I’d love to go. |

## Notes

- a) hěn yǒumíng ‘quite have-name’; the Chinese speaker responds unassumingly even though he probably feels that Xi’an, with 2500 years of history, should be hěn yǒumíng.  
 b) xiǎng, literally ‘think; think of’ but often, as here, used to indicate intention ‘want to; feel like’.

## 3.3.5 More on proximity

Cóng should be distinguished from lí, which has a similar meaning and appears in the same place in sentence structure. While cóng is associated with movement, lí is associated only with distance, and with the SVs jìn ‘close’ and yuǎn ‘far’.

Tā cóng Dàlián lái de; Dàlián  
 zài Liáoníng shěng, lí Běijīng  
 bù yuǎn.

She’s from Dalian; Dalian’s in  
 Liaoning province, not far from Beijing.

An actual distance may be substituted for jìn and yuǎn. Distances in Chinese are measured in lǐ (low tone), equivalent to half a kilometer (or a third of a mile), or in gōnglǐ ‘kilometers’, but not usually in English miles (Yīnglǐ). All are M-words, so 100 kms. would be yībǎi gōnglǐ. The noun lù ‘road’ can, in certain cases, be added to the measure phrase, optionally mediated by de: yībǎi gōnglǐ <de> lù ‘100 kms [of road]’. Since mileage is a noun, a verb still has to be provided, and in Chinese it is usually yǒu ‘have’ (unlike English, which uses ‘is’). Distances are often approximate, of course, so it is also useful to learn the adverb dàgài ‘approximately’.

Jīchǎng lí wǒ de jiā yǒu  
 wǔ gōnglǐ <lù>.

The airport is 5 kms. from my house.

Xīníng lí Xī’ān dàgài yǒu yīqiān  
 gōnglǐ – hěn yuǎn.

Xining is about 1000 kms. from Xī’ān –  
 [it]’s a long way off.

Wǒ de jiā lí huǒchēzhàn yǒu  
 liǎng lǐ lù – bú tài yuǎn.

My house is 2 ‘miles’ from the station –  
 not so far.

## 3.4 The cardinal directions: NSEW

Most of the cardinal directions are already familiar from place names (as well as from airline names). Běijīng, with běi, is the ‘northern capital’. Until the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, Nánjīng was the ‘southern capital’. The Japanese capital, Tokyo, is actually the Japanese reading of the characters that, in Mandarin, are pronounced Dōngjīng the ‘eastern capital’. That leaves xī ‘west’, which is represented in the Chinese city of Xī’ān (‘western-peace’), as well as in the Chinese name for Tibet, Xīzàng ‘western-repository’. The four directions are conventionally ordered either dōngnán-xīběi ‘ESWB’, or dōngxī-nánběi ‘EWSN’.

The ordering of the directions in Chinese reflects the primacy of the east-west axis, a primacy that is underscored in the names of the diagonal quadrants: dōngběi ‘NE’, dōngnán ‘SW’, xīběi ‘NW’ and xīnán ‘SW’. Dōngběi (with a capital initial) is also the name of the northeast region of China that includes the three provinces of Hēilóngjiāng (‘black-dragon-river’), Jílín, and Liáoníng. This is roughly the area that was colonized by Japan before World War II and at the time, referred to (in English) as ‘Manchuria’ (ie, home of the Manchus, who ruled China as the Qing [Ch’ing] dynasty from 1644-1912). Although Beijing and Tianjin might be considered to be in the northeast of China, they are usually described as being in the north, zài běibīānr, with dōngběi reserved for cities that are actually in the Dōngběi region. The northwest region that includes Xīnjiāng and Qīnghǎi, is referred to as the Dàxīběi ‘The Great Northwest’; while the southwest region that includes Yúnnán, Sìchuān and Guizhōu, is called the Xīnán.

On the whole, the directions require two syllables to function as nouns. So the diagonals may stand alone: Jílín zài dōngběi; Kūnmíng zài xīnán. But otherwise, the direction words need to combine with either biān<r> ‘side; bank’, bù ‘part’, or fāng ‘side; region’.

Běijīng zài běibù.	Beijing’s in the north.
Tiānjīn zài běibīānr;	Tianjin’s to the north.
Dàtóng zài běifāng.	Datong’s in the northern region.

The three options differ. Fāng, in particular, refers not to relative direction, but to a quadrant of the country: běifāng ‘the northern region’ or ‘the North’; nánfāng ‘the southern region’ or ‘the South’. Xīfāng and dōngfāng not only mean ‘the western region’ and ‘the eastern region’ respectively, but also (capitalized) ‘the West’ (ie the Occident) and ‘the East’ (the Orient). Combinations with bù (a combining version of bùfen ‘part’) refer to position within a whole; combinations with biānr are the least restricted, simply indicating a direction. So the southern province of Guǎngdōng is zài nánbù (since it is within China) as well as zài nánbiānr. But Yuènnán ‘Vietnam’, since it is a separate country, is only zài nánbiānr, not zài nánbù (at least, with reference to China).

Central regions can be referred to as zhōngbù (zhōng as in Zhōngguó and Zhōngwén).

Wǔhàn zài zhōngbù.	Wuhan is in the center [of the country].
Chóngqīng yě zài zhōngbù ma?	Is Chongqing in the middle as well?

Location with reference to the country is expressed with the larger unit first, unlike the English order: zài Zhōngguó běibù ‘in the north of China’. There is usually the option of inserting a possessive de between the country of reference and the direction (zài Zhōngguó de běibù, zài Zhōngguó de běibīānr). De makes a nuance of difference, and reveals the source of the Chinese word order as a possessive (or more accurately, an attributive) construction: ‘in China’s north’.



Běijīng zài Zhōngguó <de> běibù. Beijing's in the north of China.  
 Niūyuē zài Měiguó <de> dōngběi. New York's in the northeast of the US.  
 Yuènnán zài Zhōngguó <de> nánbiānr. Vietnam is south of China.

### Summary of cardinal directions

xībēi<biānr>	běibiānr	dōngběi<biānr>
	[běifāng]	
<b>xībēi&lt;bù&gt;</b>	<b>běibù</b>	<b>dōngběi&lt;bù&gt;</b>
xībiānr		
[xīfāng] <b>xībù</b>	<b>zhōngbù</b>	<b>dōngbù</b> [dōngfāng]
		dōngbiānr
<b>xīnán&lt;bù&gt;</b>	<b>nánbù</b>	<b>dōngnán&lt;bù&gt;</b>
	[nánfāng]	
xīnán<biānr>	nánbiānr	dōngnán<biānr>

### Exercise 1.

State, then write down the following geographic facts:

Tiānjīn's in the north of China, about 100 kms. from Běijīng. Shěnyáng is in the northeast, not far from Běijīng either. Shěnyáng is in Liáoníng. Chéngdū is in the middle of Sìchuān, Chóngqìng is south of Chéngdū, but it's not in the southern part of Sìchuān; it's a zhíxiáshì [ie under central administration]. Kūnmíng is in Yúnnán. Yúnnán isn't Yuènnán. Yúnnán is a part of China (yí bùfēn), but Yuènnán isn't part of China – it's southwest of China.

### 3.4.1 Dialogues

a) At a reception, Jiǎ, a student in London, finds himself next to Chén Yuè, a Chinese graduate student, and initiates a conversation in Chinese:

Jiǎ Qǐngwèn, nín guìxìng?

May I ask what your name is?

Ch Wǒ xìng Chén, jiào Chén Yuè.

My name's Chen, Chen Yue.

Jiǎ	Chén Yuè, nǐ shì Zhōngguó lái de ba.	Chen Yue, you're from China, I take it.
Ch	Shì, wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén.	Right, I am.
Jiǎ	Zhōngguó shénme dìfāng rén?	[From] where abouts in China?
Ch	Chángchūn.	Changchun.
Jiǎ	O Chángchūn. Nà, Chángchūn zài Dōngběi, shì bu shì?	O, Changchun. Now, Changchun's in the NE, isn't it?
Ch	Shì, zài Jílín shěng.	Yes, in Jilin province.
Jiǎ	Lǐ Běijīng bǐjiào yuǎn ba.	Quite far from Beijing, right?
Ch	Ng, lí Běijīng hěn yuǎn, dàgài yìqiān gōnglǐ!	Yes, quite far from Beijing – about 1000 kilometers!
Jiǎ	O, shì hěn yuǎn!	Oh, [that] IS a long way!

b) Léi Hánbó, an overseas student, thinks she recognizes Zhāng Yīng from an encounter earlier in the week:

Léi	Nín shì bu shì Zhāng Yīng?	Are you Zhang Ying?
Zh	Wǒ shì Zhāng Yīng.	Yes, I'm Zhang Ying.
Léi	Zhāng Yīng, wǒ shì Léi Hánbó, Wèi lǎoshī de xuésheng.	Zhang Ying, I'm Lei Hanbo, Prof. Wei's student.
Zh	O, Léi Hánbó, nǐ hǎo. Nǐ shì Měiguó rén ba?	O, Lei Hanbo, how are you. You're American, right?
Léi	Shì, wǒ shì Měiguó Bōshìdùn rén.	Yes, I'm an American from Boston.
Zh	O, Bōshìdùn. Bōshìdùn hěn yǒumíng!	O, Boston. Boston's quite well known ('very have name')!
Léi	Shì ma?	Really?

c) Jiǎ, a foreigner, and Yǐ, a Chinese, are looking at a series of numbered illustrations of political leaders in an old copy of *China Reconstructs*; Jiǎ – the foreigner, is asking questions about who's who:

- Jiǎ      Nà, dì-yī ge shì Máo Zédōng ba.      Well, #1 is Mao Zedong, I take it.
- Yǐ      Shì, dì-yī ge shì Máo Zédōng.      Yes, #1 is Mao Zedong.
- Jiǎ      Máo Zédōng shì Húnán rén ba?      Mao Zedong's from Hunan, right?
- Yǐ      Shì, shì Húnnán rén.      Yes, [he]'s from Hunan.
- Jiǎ      Nà, dì-èr ge ne?      And #2?
- Yǐ      Dì-èr ge shì Zhōu Ēnlái.      #2 is Zhou Enlai.
- Jiǎ      O, Zhōu Ēnlái. Tā shì shénme dìfāng rén?      Oh, Zhou Enlai. Where's he from?
- Yǐ      Zhōu Ēnlái ne, tā shì Huái'ān rén.      Zhou Enlai, he's from Huai'an.
- Jiǎ      Huái'ān ne, zài Jiāngsū, shì bu shì?      Huai'an, [that]'s in Jiangsu, isn't it?
- Yǐ      Shì, zài Jiāngsū, lí Shànghǎi bù yuǎn.      Yes, in Jiangsu, not far from Shanghai.
- Jiǎ      Dì-sān ge ne?      #3?
- Yǐ      Dì-sān ge, nà shì Péng Déhuái.      #3, that's Peng Dehuai.
- Jiǎ      Péng Déhuái a, tā shì cóng shénme dìfāng lái de?      Peng Dehuai, where's [he] from?
- Yǐ      Péng Déhuái hǎoxiàng yě shì Húnán rén ba.      Seems like Peng Dehuai's also from Hunan.



Dì-yī ge shì Máo Zédōng. [JKW 1982]

### 3.5 Yes and no

As observed throughout the first two units, where English tends to include ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in answers to ‘yes-no’ questions, Chinese often answers them by simply reiterating the verb, or verbal parts, in positive form or negative, as the case may be. Agreement can be emphasized by the addition of an initial duì ‘be correct’, though disagreement frequently requires a more subtle expression than the judgemental bú duì ‘wrong’.

Hǎotīng ma?  
<Duì,> *hěn hǎotīng.*

Do you like [the music]? (nice-sound Q)  
*Yes, [I] do.*

Xǐzǎo le ma?  
*Hái méi ne.*

Have [you] bathed?  
*No, not yet.*

Tāmen yǐjīng shuìjiào le ma?  
<Duì,> *yǐjīng shuì le, kěshì Léi Bīn hái méi ne.*

Are they in bed already?  
*Yes, he has, but Lei Bin's still up.*

Léi Bīn a, Léi Bīn shì shéi?  
*Léi Bīn shì tāmen de tóngxué.*  
O, míngbai.

Lei Bin? Who's Lei Bin?  
*Lei Bin's their classmate.*  
Oh, I see.

When the main verb is itself shì, then shì confirms, with initial duì available for emphasis, and bù ~ bú shì denies:

Nǐ shì dì-yī ge ma?  
*Duì, wǒ shì dì-yī ge.*  
Nà, tā shì dì-èr ge ma?  
*Bù, tā shì dì-sān ge.*  
Shì ma?  
*Shì, dì-sān ge shì tā.*

You're the 1st?  
*Yes, I am.*  
And...she's 2nd?  
*No, she's #3.*  
Is that so?  
*Yes, she's 3rd.*

Tā shì Měiguó rén ba.  
*Duì.*  
Tā àiren yě shì ma?  
*Bú shì, tā shì Zhōngguó rén.*  
A, míngbai.

He's American, I take it.  
*Right.*  
His spouse too?  
*No, she's Chinese.*  
Oh, I see!

#### 3.5.1 Negative questions

So far so good: with ordinary yes-no questions, reiterating the verb in the positive confirms (with or without an initial duì); reiterating it in the negative denies. Negative questions, however, are not quite so forthright. Negative questions convey a change in expectations: Haven't you eaten? [I thought you had, but apparently you haven't.] Negative questions expect a negative answer: Haven't you eaten? / No, I haven't. In Chinese, as in English, it is still possible to reiterate the verb – in the negative – to confirm the new expectation. But while English generally responds to a negative question with ‘no’ (anticipating the negative verb), Chinese responds with duì ‘correct’ (confirming the negative statement).

Nǐ hái méi chīfàn ma?  
<Dùi,> hái méi ne.

Haven't you eaten yet?  
No, not yet.

Tāmen bú shì Měiguó rén ba.  
<Dùi,> tāmen bú shì Měiguó rén.

They're not Americans, right.  
No, they're not.

It is this incongruity between English and Chinese that gives rise to the observation that Chinese (along with Japanese and other languages in the region) has no equivalent to English 'yes' and 'no'.

What if, in the last example, counter to new expectations (but in conformity to the original ones), the people in question turned out to be Americans after all? In that case, the responses in both Chinese and English are less predictable. But typically, Chinese would change the value of the verb to positive and put emphasis on it: Tāmen shì Měiguó rén. And an introductory negative – bù, bù – would indicate the change from the new expectations back to the old.

Tāmen bú shì Měiguó rén ba?  
*Bù, bù, tāmen SHÌ Měiguó rén.*

They're not Americans, are they?  
*Yes they are.*

Here again, while the English 'yes' matches the positive verb ('they are Americans'), Chinese bù (or bú shì) denies the anticipated answer ('it's not the case that they aren't Americans').

Nà bú shì nǐ de hùzhào ma?  
*Dùi, bú shì wǒ de.*  
*Bù, bù, SHÌ wǒ de.*

Isn't that your passport?  
*No, it's not.*  
*Yes it is.*

### 3.5.2 Tag-questions

Sometimes, it is appropriate to indicate doubt, or seek confirmation by the use of *tag-questions*. The addition of questions formed with shì or duì to the foot of the sentence serve such a function.

Sūzhōu zài Jiāngsū, duì ma?  
*Dùi a, Sūzhōu zài Jiāngsū.*

Suzhou's in Jiangsu, correct?  
*[That]'s the case, Suzhou's in Jiangsu.*

Tā shì Yīngguó rén, shì bu shì?  
*Bú shì, tā shì Jiānádà rén.*

He's English, right?  
*No, he's Canadian.*

Nǐ de sǎn, shì bu shì?  
*Shì, xièxie.*

[This] is your umbrella, isn't it?  
*[It] is, thanks.*

Tā shì Dài Sīyí, duì bu duì?  
*Dùi, shì Dài Sīyí.*

That's Dai Siyi, right?  
*Right, Dai Siyi.*

### 3.5.3 Is it the case that...?

Shì bu shì can also be inserted before sentence elements to seek confirmation; and responses can be re-asserted by inserting a (fully stressed) shì ‘it is the case that’, as the following examples show:

Zhènjiāng shì bu shì zài Ānhuī?	Is Zhenjiang really in Anhui?
Bù, Zhènjiāng zài Jiāngsū, lí Nánjīng bù yuǎn.	No, it isn't. Zhenjiang's in Jiangsu, not far from Nanjing.

Shì bu shì in such sentences questions an underlying assumption: Zhenjiang's in Anhui. Shì in the response confirms it. These shì's are particularly common as a way of questioning adverbs:

Zhōngwén lǎoshī shì bu shì hěn yán?	Is it the case that Ch. teachers are strict?
Duì, tāmen shì hěn yán.	Yes, they [really] are!

Zhèr de lǎoshī shì bu shì zǒngshì hěn lèi?	Is it the case that the teachers here are always tired?
Tāmen shì hěn lèi, kěshì xuéshēng bú shì gèng lèi ma.	They <u>are</u> quite tired, but aren't students even more tired?

Tāmen shì bu shì dōu yǐng qīlái le?	Is it the case that they're all up already?
Bù, xiǎo Liáng hái méiyǒu qīlái, tā yǒu yìdiǎnr bù shūfu.	No, young Liang isn't up yet, he's not very well.

The appearance of shì with SVs in such sentences should not undermine your understanding that shì does not appear with SVs in neutral, unemphatic contexts.

### Exercise 2.

Provide Chinese equivalents for the following interchanges:

You were born in Thailand, right?  
Yes, but my nationality is American.

Is it the case that Nanjing isn't far from Shànghǎi?  
That's right, it isn't that far away, about 200 kms.

Aren't they Chinese?  
No, they're not. None of them is. Two of them are Korean, and two are Thai.

Isn't that your umbrella?  
No, it's not mine. / I think it is!

Is Tianjin near Beijing?  
Yes it is. It's about 180 kms from Beijing.

### 3.6 Thanks and sorry.

#### 3.6.1 Responses to thanking

Thanking is not quite as perfunctory in Chinese as in English. In English, thanks are often given even after making a purchase, or when a waiter serves a dish or brings a drink. In Chinese, such transactions are more likely to be acknowledged with just hǎo ‘fine’ – if anything. Explicit thanking is not common, but where an action is worthy of thanks, then in informal or colloquial situations, xièxie or duōxiè (the latter, under the influence of Cantonese) suffices, while in more formal situations, the verb gǎnxiè ‘feel thanks’ can be used: hěn gǎnxiè <nǐ>. Responses to xièxie (or gǎnxiè), corresponding to English ‘you’re welcome’, vary considerably in Chinese. The main ones are listed below, with literal meanings.

Xièxie <nǐ>.

Thanks.

You’re welcome. >

*Bú xiè.*

*not thank*

*Bú yòng xiè.*

*not use thank*

*Bú kèqì*

*not be+polite*

*Bié kèqì!*

*don’t be+polite*

*Bú yào kèqì.*

*not want be+polite*

*Bú yòng kèqì.*

*not use be+polite*

*Béng kèqì. [northern]*

*no-use be+polite*

*Yīnggāi de!*

*‘[It]’s what [I] should [do]!’*

#### Notes

- a) Yòng’s core meaning is ‘to use’; yào’s is ‘want’.; but in the above contexts, the meanings of both are closer to ‘need’. Béng is a telescoped version of bú + yòng.  
 b) Kèqì is composed of roots for ‘guest’ and ‘air; spirit’, so the literal meaning is, roughly, ‘adopt the airs of a guest’. Kè appears in expressions such as qǐngkè ‘entertain guests; to treat [by paying] (invite-guests)’ and words like kèrén ‘guest (guest-person)’ and kètīng ‘living room; parlor (guest-hall)’. Qì appears in words such as tiānqì ‘weather’ and qìfēn ‘atmosphere’.

*Tā hěn kèqì*

*(S)he’s very polite.*

*Nǐ bié kèqì, wǒ qǐngkè.*

*Don’t worry, I’m treating.*

- c) Yīnggāi de, containing the ‘modal verb’ yīnggāi ‘should; ought’ (cf. gāi), is a common response to a serious expression of gratitude. Xièxie nǐ lái jiē wǒ! / Yīnggāi de!

When someone fills your glass when you are conversing at a meal, or at other times when you might want to indicate appreciation without actually saying anything, you can tap the index finger, or the index and middle fingers on the table to express thanks. The practice is said to represent with bent fingers, the act of bowing.





### 3.6.4 Don't

The several responses to thanking and apologizing actually provide examples of the three main words of negation, bù, méi, and a third found in imperatives [orders], bié 'don't'.

The last can be combined with the verb wàng 'forget; leave behind', as follows:

Nǐ de sǎn, bié wàng le. <i>O, duì, xièxie.</i> Bú xiè.	Your umbrella, don't forget [it]! <i>O, right, thanks!</i> You're welcome.
Nǐ de píbāo, bié wàng le! <i>O, tiān a, wǒ de píbāo! Duōxiè, duōxiè.</i> Bú yòng kèqì.	Don't forget your wallet! <i>Oh, gosh, my wallet!</i> <i>Many thanks!</i> You're welcome.

### Exercise 3.

Provide Chinese interchanges along the following lines:

Excuse me, where abouts is the office?  
*The office is upstairs.*

Don't forget your passport!  
*O, 'heavens', my passport, thanks.*  
You're welcome!

Your bookbag, don't forget [it].  
*Yikes, thanks!*  
You're welcome.

Have some tea!  
*No, I'm fine, thanks.*

What'll you have to drink?  
*You have tea?*

## 3.7 Things to drink

Traditionally, Chinese quenched their thirst with soup (often simply the water used to boil vegetables) or, if they could afford it, tea (which was introduced to China from India around the beginning of the Tang dynasty). For formal occasions, there were varieties of jiǔ, alcoholic drinks made from grains, such as rice and millet.

Nowadays, soup, tea and boiled water (kāishuǐ 'open water') are still probably the main beverages, but with increasing affluence and foreign commercial influence, drinking practices are changing, particularly in urban areas. Iced drinks, which were traditionally regarded as unhealthy – as they probably are – are now common. Soy milk

drinks are popular, and even cow's milk is gaining acceptance (despite widespread lactose intolerance). With the rise of fancy restaurants and cocktail bars, alcohol drinking practices are changing too. A Franco-Chinese joint enterprise is producing wines made with grapes under the Dynasty (*Chádài*) label. Brandies and whiskeys are quite popular. Foreign wines and spirits (*yángjiǔ*), are drunk in different fashion in China. Grape wines and spirits, for example, are sometimes mixed with carbonated drinks, or are watered down and drunk with meals. Spirits, served in small glasses or cups, are more compatible with Chinese practices of toasting (cf. §8.4.5) than are grape wines served in larger amounts.

*Non-alcoholic*

chá	tea	kāfēi	coffee
kělè	cola [generic]	kāishuǐ	boiled water
qìshuǐ	carbonated drinks; soda	júzi shuǐ	orange juice
guǒzhī	fruit juice	níngméngzhī	lemonade
niúǎi	milk	dòujiāng	soybean milk
kuànguānshuǐ	mineral water (mineral-spring-water)		
Kékǒu kělè	Coke	Bǎishì kělè	Pepsi
Xuěbì	Sprite (snow-azure)'	Qī Xǐ	7 Up

*Alcoholic (jiǔ)*

yángjiǔ ('foreign-wine'); any foreign alcoholic drinks, both wines and spirits

*Milder drinks -- 'wines' and beers*

píjiǔ	beer
zhāpí, shēngpí	draft beer
mǐjiǔ	rice wine
pútaojiǔ	wine (grape-wine)
hóngjiǔ	red wine
hóngpútaojiǔ	red wine (red+grape-wine)
báipútaojiǔ	white wine
Shàoxīngjiǔ	a smooth rice wine, often served hot, from Shàoxīng in Zhèjiāng province.

*Spirits*

báijiǔ	generic white spirit, with high alcohol content.
liángshíjiǔ	generic name for wines made from grains.
gāoliang<jiǔ>	a white spirit made from gaoliang, or 'sorghum'.
Máotái<jiǔ>	the most famous of Chinese liquors, from Maotai in Guìzhōu.
Wǔliángyè	('5-grains-liquid'); a popular grain liquor with a medicinal taste.

The syllable *pí* in *píjiǔ* derives from the English word 'beer'; *jiǔ* is generic for alcoholic drinks. Nowadays, there are a large number of popular beers in China, eg *Yànjīng píjiǔ* (from *Yànjīng*, an old name for *Běijīng*), *Shànghǎi píjiǔ*, *Wǔxīng píjiǔ* ('5

star'), Xuě lù píjiǔ ('snow deer') and Qīngdǎo píjiǔ, named after the city of Qīngdǎo in Shandong. The Qīngdǎo Co. was originally a German brewery, set up in the German concession in Shandong.

#### Exercise 4

You can practice ordering drinks in succinct language, stating the item first, and then the amount: Niú nǎi, yì bēi. 'A glass of milk.' Typically, soft drinks are now served cold (albeit sometimes at a slightly higher price), but if not, you can request a cold one by saying bīng de 'ice one', or yào bīng de 'want ice one'. In ordinary places, ice is not usually added to drinks, possibly because people are aware that it may be made from non-potable sources. But to be sure, you may want to add bú yào bīngkuài 'not want icecubes' or, more politely, qǐng bié jiā bīngkuài 'request don't add icecubes'. Now, following the model above, try ordering the following:

1. A glass of coke; check to see if they have cold ones.
2. A bottle of orange juice.
3. 2 bottles of cold beer.
4. Tea for two; and a cup of boiled water.
5. 2 bottles of mineral water.
6. Find out if they have draft beer; if so, order two mugs.
7. 2 cups of coffee with milk.
8. Find out what kinds of soda they have; order two bottles or glasses.



Lái yì bēi lǚchá ba. [JKW 2002]

### 3.7.1 Dialogue

Huáng Jūrén (male) hears a knock on the door and recognizes his friend, Zhèng Chūnhuá (female). He addresses her with the personal xiǎo+last syllable of míngzi:

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| Hg. | Shéi a?  | Who is it?   |
| Zh. | Wǒ shì Zhèng Chūnhuá.  | I'm Zhèng Chūnhuá.   |
| Hg. | O, Xiǎohuá, qǐngjìn, qǐngzuò.  | Oh, Xiǎohuá, come on in, have a seat.                                |
| Zh. | Xièxie. Ài, jīntiān rè jile!   | Thanks. Gosh, it's so hot today!                                     |
| Hg. | Ng. Nà nǐ hē yidiǎnr shénme?<br>Yǒu kělè, níngméngzhī, píjiǔ.            | Sure is. What'll you have to drink?<br>There's cola, lemonade, beer. |
| Zh. | Bú yòng le, bú yòng le.  | No need! [I'm fine.]   |
| Hg. | Nǐ bié kèqi. Hē ba!  | Relax! Have something!   |
| Zh. | Hǎo, nà lái <yì> bēi lǜchá ba.   | Okay, bring a cup of green tea, please.                              |
| Hg. | Hǎo, lùchá....Nǐ zuìjìn zěnmeyàng?                                       | Okay, green tea....How are you doing these days?                     |
| Zh. | Hái kěyǐ. Zuótiān yǒu diǎnr<br>bù shūfu, dànshì xiànzài hǎo le.          | I'm okay. I didn't feel too well yesterday, but I'm okay now.        |
| Hg. | Nǐ tài máng le!  | You're too busy!   |
| Zh. | Shì yǒu diǎnr máng! Nǐ yě shì.<br>Xuésēng zǒngshì hěn<br>máng hěn lèi a! | I am a bit! You too! Students are always tired and busy.             |

#### Notes

1. Other teas: lóngjǐng chá a type of green tea; wūlóng chá 'oolong tea'; júhuāchá 'chrysanthemum tea'; [Yīngguó] nǎichá '(English milk-tea)'.  
2. Zuìjìn 'recently; these days'.

## 3.8 Why, because, so

If someone says they are tired or anxious, you will want to find out why. 'Why', wèishénme, is made up of wèi 'for [the sake of]' and shénme 'what'. The response will often be introduced with yīnwèi 'because'. Suǒyǐ 'so' introduces the consequences. Before you can give good reasons, you need some additional vocabulary. The following nouns all have to do with classwork:

kǎoshì	gōngkè	zuòyè	bàogào	shíyàn
test; exam	assignments	homework	reports	experiments

## Notes

Kǎoshì and shíyàn are also [two-syllable] verbs, meaning ‘to do a test’ and ‘do an experiment’. ‘To test someone’s ability in a subject’ is simply kǎo: Yīnggāi kǎo tāmen de Zhōngwén ‘[We] should test their Chinese’. For now, concentrate on the use of these words as nouns.

## Dialogues

- A. Jīntiān zěnmeyàng? How are you today?  
 Yǒu kǎoshì suǒyǐ yǒu yìdiǎnr jǐnzhāng. [I] have a test, so I’m a bit nervous.
- B. Nǐ wèishénme jǐnzhāng? How come?  
 <Yīnwei> míngtiān yǒu kǎoshì. [I] have an test tomorrow.  
 Shénme kǎoshì? What kind of test?  
 Zhōngwén kǎoshì. A Chinese test.

## 3.8.1 A lot of

Duō (a word to be carefully distinguished from dōu ‘all’) is a SV meaning ‘much; many; lots, etc.’ Its opposite, shǎo, can mean ‘few; not many’ but is also common as an adverb meaning ‘seldom; rarely’. Duō has some rather idiosyncratic properties: it may modify nouns directly (without de), but to do so, it requires the presence of at least a modifying adverb, such as hěn:

yǒu hěn duō <de> gōngkè	lots of assignments
yǒu hěn duō <de> kǎoshì	lots of tests
yǒu hěn duō <de> zuòyè	lots of homework

Instead of hěn, the two more or less synonymous adverbs zhème ‘in this way; so; such’ and nàme ‘in that way; so; such’, can also be used in conjunction with duō (and shǎo):

zhème duō gōngkè	such a lot of assignments
nàme duō bàogào	so many reports

Duō and shǎo can also be used as predicates – that is, main verbs. English finds the literal translation of the construction awkward (ie ‘exams are numerous’), preferring instead an existential ‘there is/are’, or a possessive ‘we have’:

Shíyàn duō bu duō?	Are there lots of experiments?
Gōngkè bǐjiào duō.	There are relatively many assignments.
Bàogào yě hěn duō.	[We] also have lots of reports.
Zuòyè gèng duō.	There is even more homework.
Kǎoshì bù shǎo.	[I] have quite a number of tests.
Zuòyè wèishénme nàme shǎo?	How come so little homework?

Reference can be made to the course by simply presenting it at the head of the sentence as a ‘topic’:

Zhōngwén, zuòyè hěn duō.	Chinese [class] has a lot of homework.
Rìwén, zuòyè duō dànshì kǎoshì shǎo.	Japanese [class] has a lot of homework, but few tests.

Sentences of the above type can usually be re-formed with yǒu, ‘have’, which makes them look rather more like the English:

Zhōngwén yǒu hěn duō zuòyè.	Chinese has lots of homework.
Rìwén méiyǒu nàme duō kǎoshì.	Japanese does have so many tests.
Zhōngwén, zuótiān yǒu kǎoshì, jīntiān yǒu bàogào.	[We] has a test in Chinese yesterday, [and] today we have a report.

*Summary (\* not possible)*

Yǒu Zhōngwén zuòyè.	[We] have Chinese homework.
*Yǒu duō Zhōngwén zuòyè.	
Yǒu hěn duō Zhōngwén zuòyè. OR: Zhōngwén, zuòyè hěn duō.	There’s a lot of Ch. homework. [Chinese has lots of homework.]
Yǒu zhème duō Zhōngwén zuòyè.	There’s so much Ch. homework!
Yǒu nàme duō Zhōngwén zuòyè.	There’s so much Ch. homework!

**Exercise 5.**

In Chinese:

1. Explain that students have lots of homework each day so they’re always tired.
2. Ask why Japanese doesn’t have a lot of tests.
3. Explain that there are no classes tomorrow because it’s May the 1<sup>st</sup>.
4. Explain that your Chinese teacher is quite strict, and that you have lots of tests.
5. Explain that you didn’t have any homework yesterday.
6. Ask why they have so many reports.
7. Explain that you feel quite nervous today because you have a test.
8. Explain that you have lots of tests, and even more assignments.
9. Explain that physics [class] isn’t hard, but it has lots of homework.
10. Ask why they all have so many keys?

### 3.9 Money

G.E. Morrison, who wrote a book called *An Australian in China*, about his journey across southwest China to northern Burma at the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, described how he managed his money:

Money in Western China consists of solid ingots of silver, and copper cash. The silver is in lumps of one tael or more each, the tael being a Chinese ounce and equivalent roughly to between 1400 and 1500 cash. ... From Hankow to Chungking my money was remitted by draft through a Chinese bank. ... I carried some silver with me; the rest I put up in a package and handed to a native post in Chungking, which undertook to deliver it intact to me in Yunnan city, 700 miles away, within a specified period. ... Money is thus remitted in Western China with complete confidence and security. [Morrison 1902: 95]

Round coins (often bearing a niánhào or ‘reign name’) with square holes in the middle (round said to be symbolic of heaven, square, of earth) were in use in China from several centuries BCE. In later times, these were often called ‘cash’, a translation of qián. Carried in strings of 1000, they were the medium of exchange for small purchases. Morrison also carried lumps of silver, useful for larger transactions. These were measured in *taels* [from Malay *tahil*], a weight that often translates the Chinese liǎng. Liǎng is still a regular measure of weight in markets in China. Originally 16 liǎng made up a jīn, but in the modern system, it is 10. Jīn is usually translated with another term derived from Malay, the ‘catty’. Paper money, reimbursable for silver (at least in those periods when the economy was well managed), has been in circulation in China for well over 1000 years. Dollars, that come into circulation in China from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, were not US dollars but Spanish (or Mexican).

#### Modern currencies

Nowadays, currency on the Mainland is the Rénmínbì ‘people’s-currency’, often abbreviated in English as ‘RMB’. Its main unit is the yuán, called kuài colloquially and translated as ‘dollar’ or ‘Chinese dollar’. Below the yuán is the jiǎo (máo colloquially) ‘ten cents’ and the fēn ‘cent’. Thus, in speech, \$1.25 is yí kuài liǎng máo wǔ ‘one dollar two dimes five’ (rather than a dollar and 25 fēn). Bills (as of 2003) have values of one, two, five, ten, fifty and a hundred. There are some small sized bills for values below one yuán. Coins are for low values only (some of which duplicate bills), including a one yuán piece, a 5 máo (50 cents), one máo (10 cents) and various very small denominations.

During the height of the communist period, foreign currencies were exchanged not for RMB, but for wàihuìjuàn, ‘Foreign Exchange Certificates’ or simply ‘FEC’. FEC were denominated like RMB and had the same official value, but since FEC were required for the purchase of foreign goods, they gained value on unofficial ‘black’ markets. FEC were abandoned in the early 90s. [The Chinese government, apparently, sold their remaining FEC to the government of neighboring Burma [Myanmar], who adopted the FEC system at about the time the Chinese abandoned it.]

In Taiwan (the ROC), the unit of currency is the Xīn Táibì, called the ‘new Taiwan Dollar’ in English (and abbreviated \$NT). Like its Mainland counterpart, it is called the yuán (kuài colloquially), with smaller units called jiǎo (máo) and fēn. Hong

Kong also retains its own currency, called Gǎngbì. Current (9/05) exchange rates for RMB are approximately 8.1 to the US dollar; for \$NT, approximately 31 to the dollar, and for HK\$, approximately 7.7 to the dollar.

In Unit 2, you learned that money, qián, is counted with kuài ‘yuan; dollar’. In fact, in formal language, yuán itself is the M-word, so that yí kuài qián is usually written (and sometimes spoken) as yì yuán (一圓 or 一元; both characters are used, but the latter is more common).

### 3.9.1 Dollars and cents

Currency is subdivided into the following units (which are all M’s):

<i>informal, spoken</i>	<i>literal meaning</i>	<i>formal, written</i>	<i>value</i>
kuài	‘lump; piece’	yuán	‘round’
máo	‘hair; small amount’	jiǎo	
fēn	‘part’	fēn	
			RMB 1.00
			RMB 0.10
			RMB 0.01

Note that qián is the noun, kuài, máo, fēn etc. are M’s by which qián is counted:

yí kuài qián	liǎng kuài qián	sān kuài qián	wǔ kuài qián	shí kuài qián
yí kuài	liǎng kuài	sān kuài	wǔ kuài	shí kuài
RMB 1	RMB 2	RMB 3	RMB 5	RMB 10
liǎng máo	bā máo	sān fēn <qián>	jiǔ fēn <qián>	liǎng máo wǔ
RMB 0.8	RMB 0.4	3 cents	9 cents	25 cents

#### Notes

Kuài and máo are the normal spoken forms. However, yuán and jiǎo, while primarily written forms that appear on currency, on menus, and bills, are, in certain formal settings like hotels and banks, sometimes spoken: eg: sì yuán wǔ jiǎo ‘Y4.50’.

### Exercise 6.

Practice citing the following prices until fluent:

1.	30 cents	11.	25.00
2.	50 cents	12.	11.85
3.	1.00	13.	35.00
4.	1.40	14.	39.95
5.	2.00	15.	19.35
6.	85 cents	16.	15 cents
7.	95 cents	17.	75 cents
8.	3.60	18.	1.85
9.	9.95	19.	99.00
10.	15.00	20.	102.00



### 3.9.2 How many?

#### a) Duōshao

The opposites duō ‘many’ and shǎo ‘few’ combine to form the question word duōshao ‘how many’ (with qīngshēng on the second syllable).

Jīntiān yǒu duōshao xuéshēng?	How many students today?
<i>Yǒu èrshísān ge.</i>	<i>23.</i>
Zuótiān ne?	And yesterday?
<i>Zuótiān yǒu èrshísì ge!</i>	<i>24, yesterday.</i>
Duōshao qián?	How much money?
<i>Liǎng kuài.</i>	<i>Y2.00.</i>

#### b) Jǐ ge?

When the expected number is low, the question word is not duōshao, but jǐ + M. Smaller than expected numbers and amounts may attract the adverb zhǐ ‘only’.

Yǒu duōshao xuéshēng?	How many students are there?
<i>Yǒu èrshísì ge.</i>	<i>24.</i>
Yǒu jǐ ge lǎoshī?	How many teachers are there?
<i>Zhǐ yǒu yí ge.</i>	<i>Only one.</i>
Nǐ yǒu jǐ kuài qián?	How much [money] do you have?
<i>Wǒ zhǐ yǒu yí kuài.</i>	<i>I only have a dollar.</i>
Wǒ de jiā lí jīchǎng zhǐ yǒu sān gōnglǐ.	My house is only 3 kms. from the airport!
<i>Nà hěn jìn!</i>	<i>That's close!</i>

#### c) Prices

Prices can be asked with duōshao (usually without M) or jǐ + M; the item in question can be placed first, with the sense of ‘cost’ left implicit:

Bǐjìběn duōshao qián?	How much are notebooks?
Yǔsǎn jǐ kuài qián?	How many dollars for an umbrella?

Where items are sold by particular amounts, Chinese will use an appropriate M:

Sān kuài bā yí ge.	\$3.80 each (‘for one’).
Wǔ máo yí fēn.	\$0.50 each. [newspapers]
Shí'èr kuài sān yí běn.	\$12.30 each [notebooks]

### 3.9.3 Making a purchase

In China, shopping often takes place under adverse conditions: markets are noisy and crowded; vendors often have strong local accents; tickets are sold through small windows jammed with customers. So it pays to reduce grammatical complexity, and speak in short,

sharp phrases. We will start with food and drink. To earlier drink vocabulary, we can add some fruit. (For health reasons, Chinese peel fruit before eating – many even peel grapes.)

píngguǒ	xiāngjiāo	xīguā	mángguǒ	chéngzi
<i>apples</i>	<i>bananas</i>	<i>water melons</i>	<i>mangoes</i>	<i>oranges</i>
yí ge	yí ge	yí kuài /piàn	yí ge	yí ge
	yí chuàn	yí ge		

These are purchased as wholes (yí ge), as parts (yí kuài ‘a piece’, yí piàn ‘a slice’), or bunches (yí chuàn ‘a bunch; cluster’). Or they are bought by weight (typically by the *jin* or ‘catty’ in China).

yì jīn	‘a catty’	½ a kilogram; 1.2 lbs
yì liǎng	‘a tael’	10 <i>liang</i> in a <i>jin</i>
yì gōngjīn	‘a kilogram’	2 catties, or 2.2 lbs
yì bàng	‘a pound’	

#### Notes

- a) Not so long ago, the liǎng was 1/16 of a jīn (hence the term ‘Chinese ounce’).
- b) People say èr liǎng ‘2 taels’ rather than the awkward \*liǎng liǎng.

Other items:

bǐnggān	miànbāo	gāodiǎn	miànjīnzhǐ	bīngjílín
<i>biscuits</i>	<i>bread</i>	<i>pastries</i>	<i>tissues</i>	<i>icecream [stick]</i>
bāo	gè	gè	bāo	gēn

#### Notes

- a) bǐng is the generic for tortilla or pancake like foods; gān means ‘dry’.
- b) gāo is generic for ‘cakes’; diǎn is ‘a bit’ or ‘a snack’.
- c) bīngjílín, also pronounced bīngqílín (and sometimes bīngjílíng) ‘ice-cream’ (with jílín ~ qílín, etc. representing English ‘cream’); ice-cream comes on a stick (yì gēn), in tubs (yì xiǎobēi) and in cartons (yì hé).

#### Exercise 7.

What would you say to purchase the following items in the amounts indicated?

Work with a partner, if possible, with one of you buying and the other selling. Keep the small talk to a minimum. The buyer should begin with a perfunctory (but friendly) greeting (hǎo), then state the item – pointing to it if possible – and the number needed. The seller is likely to volunteer the price (per unit, if relevant), and the buyer can then repeat it to himself, or for confirmation, and close with: Hǎo, jiù zhèiyàng ba. You would be expected to bargain a bit at street stalls (cf. §8.4) – less so in shops. For now, you are buying small things and you won’t lose much!

1. apple	1	/	0.30 cents each
2. bananas	1 bunch	/	2.50 for a bunch
3. apples	1 catty	/	1.50 for a catty
4. biscuits	1 pack	/	3.00 a pack
5. spring water	1 bottle	/	1.00 a bottle
6. cola	2 bottles	/	5.00 for 2 bottles
7. bread	1 loaf	/	4.00 a loaf
8. bun	3	/	1.50 for 3
9. orange juice	1 bottle	/	1.75 a bottle
10. water melon	1 slice	/	0.80 per slice
11. water melon	whole	/	1:30 per jin
12. cigarets	1 pack	/	4.00 per pack
13. bananas	2	/	0.60 for 2
14. tissue	2 packs	/	3.00 per pack
15. ice-cream	1 tub	/	1.40 per tub
16. Mènglóng	1 stick	/	6.00 per stick.

(Mènglóng is the Chinese translation of ‘Magnum’, the name of a Wall’s [brand] of chocolate covered vanilla icecream, one of a number of ‘popsicles’ sold widely at street stands and small shops throughout China.)

---



Duōshao qián yì jīn? [JKW 1997]

### 3.10 Other numbered sets

#### 3.10.1 Telephone numbers

‘Telephone number’ is diànhuà hàomǎ (‘telephone + number’). Asking about phone numbers makes use of the question words duōshao or shénme:

<Nǐ de> diànhuà <hàomǎ> shì duōshao?      What’s your phone number?  
 <Nǐ de> diànhuà <hàomǎ> shì shénme?

Local phone numbers in major Mainland cities generally have 7 or 8 digits, ie 3 + 4 or 4 + 4. (Area codes have 0 + 2 or 3 digits.) To state phone numbers, you need to know that ‘zero’ is líng; and that on the Mainland (but not Taiwan), the number ‘one’ (in strings of numbers, such as telephone numbers) is yāo rather than yī.

Wǒ jiā lǐ de diànhuà shì: (bāliùyāolíng) liù’èrwǔliù-jiǔ’èrsānsān.  
 Wǒ de shǒujī shì: (yāosānliùbā) yāosībā sānqī’èrbā. *Zài shuō yì biān:*  
 (yāosānliùbā) yāosībā sānqī’èrbā.

My home phone is: (8610) 6256-9233. My cell is (1368) 148-3728.  
 [I]’ll repeat it (‘again say one time’): (1368) 148-3728.

Diànhuà ‘electric-speech’ is the word for an ordinary telephone, but in China people are more likely to talk about their shǒujī ‘mobile-phone (hand-machine)’. A variation on shǒujī is xiǎolíngtōng ‘small-lively-communicator’, a cheap mobile phone that can be used only in a single locale.

### 3.10.2 Days of the week

The traditional Chinese lunar month was divided into three periods (xún) of 10 days each. But when the western calendar was adopted, a term lǐbài, itself a compound of lǐ ‘ceremony; reverence’ and bài ‘pay respects’, which had been adapted by Christians to mean ‘worship’, was used to name days of the week. Nowadays, the word xīngqī ‘star-period’ is preferred in print, at least on the Mainland, but lǐbài continues as the main colloquial form. The days of the week are formed by the addition of numerals, beginning with yī for Monday. [Unlike in the US, the calendrical week begins with Monday in China, not Sunday.]

Monday	lǐbàiyī	xīngqīyī
Tuesday	lǐbài’èr	xīngqī’èr
Wednesday	lǐbàisān	xīngqīsān
Thursday	lǐbàisì	xīngqīsì
Friday	lǐbàiwǔ	xīngqīwǔ
Saturday	lǐbàiliù	xīngqīliù
Sunday	lǐbàitiān	xīngqītiān
(Sunday	lǐbàirì	xīngqīrì )

Since the variable for days of the week is a number, the question is formed with jǐ ‘how many’: lǐbàijǐ ~ xīngqījǐ ‘what day of the week’. Notice that there is no \*lǐbàiqī or \*xīngqīqī to confuse with lǐbàijǐ and xīngqījǐ.

‘Daily’ can be expressed as měitiān ‘everyday’. And a period of time covering several consecutive days can be expressed with cóng ‘from’ and dào ‘to’: <cóng> lǐbàiyī dào <lǐbài>sì ‘<from> Monday to Thursday’.

Jīntiān lǐbàijǐ?  
*Jīntiān lǐbàiyī.*

What’s the day today?  
*It’s Monday.*

Míngtiān líbài'èr, shì bu shì? <i>Shì, zuótiān shì líbàitiān.</i>	Tomorrow's Tuesday, isn't it? <i>Yes, yesterday was Sunday.</i>
Líbài'èr yǒu kǎoshì ma? <i>Yǒu, dànshì líbàisān méiyǒu kè.</i>	Is/was there an exam on Tuesday? <i>Yes, but there are no classes on Wednesday.</i>
Xīngqīsì hěn máng . <i>Xīngqīwǔ xíng ma?</i>	[I]'m busy on Thursday. <i>Will Friday work?</i>
Měitiān dōu yǒu kè ma? <i>Bù, xīngqīyī dào &lt;xīngqī&gt;sì dōu yǒu, dànshì xīngqīwǔ méiyǒu.</i>	Do you have class everyday? <i>No, Monday to Thursday I do, but not on Friday.</i>

*Notes*

Recall that in giving dates, eg jīntiān xīngqīyī, shì is often omitted if no adverbs are present. In the negative, shì would appear as support for the adverb, bù:  
Jīntiān bù shì xīngqīyī.

**3.10.3 Days of the month**

Days of the month are formed, quite regularly, with hào, which in this context means 'number':

Jīntiān jǐ hào? <i>Èrshísān hào.</i>	What's the date today? <i>The 23rd.</i>
Èrshíwǔ hào hěn máng – yǒu <i>Zhōngwén kǎoshì.</i>	[We]'re busy on the 25th – there's a Chinese test.

*a) Names of the months*

The names of the months are also quite regular, formed with the word yuè 'moon; month' (often expanded to yuèfēn) and a number: sānyuè 'March,' liùyuèfēn 'June', shíyīyuè 'November'. As with the other date elements, the question is formed with jǐ 'how many':

Jīntiān jǐyuè jǐ hào? Jīntiān liùyuè èrshí'èr hào. Shíyuè sān hào yǒu kǎoshì.	What's the date today? Today's June 22st. There's a test on October 3rd.
Wǔyuè yí hào shì Guóqìng jié suǒyǐ méiyǒu kè.	May 1 <sup>st</sup> is National Day so there are no classes.

Notice that expressions that designate 'time when' precede their associated verbs!

**3.10.4 Siblings**

The collective for brothers and sisters is xiōngdì-jǐemèi. Older brother is gēge; xiōng is an archaic equivalent; but the other syllables are all single-syllable reflections of the

independent words for siblings: dìdì ‘younger brother’, jiějie ‘older sister’ and mèimei ‘younger sister’.

Nǐ yǒu xiōngdì-jǐemèi ma? <i>Yǒu &lt;yí&gt; ge dìdì, yí ge mèimei.</i>	Do you have any brothers or sisters? <i>[I] have a younger brother, and a y. sis.</i>
Yǒu méiyǒu xiōngdì-jǐemèi? <i>Wǒ zhǐ yǒu &lt;yí&gt; ge jiějie.</i>	Do [you] have any brothers or sisters? <i>I only have an older sister.</i>
Hǎoxiàng nǐ yǒu <yí> ge gēge, duì ma? <i>Méiyǒu, zhǐ yǒu &lt;yí&gt; ge jiějie.</i>	Seems like you have an older brother, right? <i>No, only an older sister.</i>

*Note*

In object position, the yí of yí ge is often elided, as indicated by <yí> ge.

### 3.10.5 Yígòng ‘altogether; in all’

Yígòng is an adverb meaning ‘all together; in all’, but because it is more versatile than prototypical adverbs such as yě and dōu, it is classified as a ‘moveable adverb’.

Moveable adverbs, unlike regular ones, can sometimes appear *without* a following verb:

Jīntiān yígòng yǒu duōshao xuésheng? <i>Yígòng yǒu shíqī ge.</i>	How many students today? <i>There are 17 altogether!</i>
Yígòng duōshao qián? <i>Yígòng yìqiān liǎngbǎi kuài.</i>	How much money altogether? <i>Altogether, Y1200.</i>

### Exercise 8.

1. Tell them what your phone number is.
2. Let them know today’s date.
2. Ask how many students there are today altogether?
3. Explain that you have a younger brother and an older sister.
4. Explain that there’s an exam on October 30<sup>th</sup>.
5. Explain that you only have a dollar.
6. Explain that you’re feeling quite anxious -- because you have so many exams!
7. Explain that you have an exam everyday from Monday to Thursday.

## 3.11 Courses and classes

### 3.11.1 Subjects of study

Subjects of study – courses – frequently end in xué ‘study; learning’ (cf. xuésheng); however, when a subject consists of two or more syllables, the xué is optional. Here are some examples:

shùxué	(numbers-study)	mathematics
lishǐ<xué>		history
wùlǐ<xué>	(things-principles)	physics
jīngjì<xué>		economics
wénxué	(language-study)	literature
gōngchéng<xué>		engineering
guǎnlǐxué		management

Tǐyù ‘physical education’, however, is more ‘sports’ than a subject of study, so it does not usually occur with xué.

### 3.11.2 Talking about classes

#### a) Classes, courses, sessions:

Many words function as both nouns and measure words. Kè, for example, as a noun means ‘subject; course’, but as an M, it means ‘lesson’. M’s only appear after numbers (or demonstratives), and are optionally followed by nouns: yí ge <xuésheng>; zhèi ge rén, yí kuài <qíán>. But where there is no number (or demonstrative), there will be no measure words:

Jīntiān méiyǒu kè.	[I] don’t have class today.
Kè hěn nán.	The course/class is tough.
Méiyǒu pǐjiǔ le.	[We]’re out of beer!

Nouns may be counted with different measures, each conveying slightly different nuances. Kè, as a noun meaning ‘subject’ or ‘class’, for example, can be counted with the M mén (whose root-meaning is ‘door’) when the sense is ‘a *course*’; with jié (root-meaning ‘segment’) or táng (root-meaning ‘hall’), when the meaning is ‘a *class session*’.

word	kè	táng	jié	mén	bān
as NOUN	subject	hall	segment	door	session; class
as M.	lesson	class	class	course/subj	[flight etc.]

#### Examples

M: mén	Zhèi ge xuéqī, nǐ yǒu jǐ mén kè?	How many courses do you have this term? / I have four.
N: kè	Wǒ yǒu sì mén kè.	
N: kè	Jīntiān hái yǒu biéde kè ma?	Do [you] have other classes today?
M: táng	Hái yǒu liǎng táng.	I still have two more.
M: jié	Jīntiān yǒu jǐ jié?	How many [classes] today?
N: kè	Jīntiān méiyǒu kè.	I don’t have any classes today.
M: jié	Nà, míngtiān ne, míngtiān yǒu jǐ jié?	Well, what about tomorrow, how many [classes] tomorrow?
	Míngtiān zhǐ yǒu yì jié: shùxué.	Tomorrow, I just have one – mathematics.

N: kè	Jīntiān yǒu kè, kěshì míngtiān méiyǒu!	There's class today, but not tomorrow.
M: kè	Zhè shì dì-yī kè	This is the first lesson.
M: kè	Yígòng yǒu sānshí kè.	There are 30 lessons altogether.

Besides the noun kè 'class', the noun bān, whose root meaning is 'shift' or 'session' (cf. shàngbān 'go to work'), is also relevant to the subject of taking classes. Large sessions (or 'lectures') are dàbān; small sessions (or 'sections') are xiǎobān. These are counted with the general-M, gè:

Yígòng yǒu wǔ ge bān, liǎng ge dàbān, sān ge xiǎobān.	[There are] five sessions altogether, 2 lectures and 3 sections.
--	---

Like kè, bān can also be a M, but not for classes or the like. Bān is common as a M for trips of regularly scheduled transport, such as busses and airplanes: Xīngqīyī-sān-wǔ yǒu yì bān. 'There's a flight/bus/train on MWF.'

#### b) 'Taking' classes

In the examples under a), 'taking a class' was construed as 'having a class': yǒu wǔ mén kè. However, you should be aware that just as English allows the option of saying 'how many courses do you have' and 'how many are you taking', so Chinese offers options with shàng '(attend) take'; and [particularly in Taiwan] xiū '(cultivate) take', along with yǒu 'have':

Nǐ zhèi ge xuéqī shàng / yǒu / xiū jǐ mén kè?	How many courses are you taking this semester?
Wǒ shàng / yǒu / xiū wǔ mén.	I'm taking 5.

### 3.11.3 Moveable adverbs (dāngrán; yídìng)

#### a) Dāngrán 'of course'

Dāngrán, like yígòng, is classed as a moveable adverb, because some of the positional requirements of typical adverbs (such as the requirement of a following verb) are relaxed:

Lǐbàiwǔ yǒu kè ma?	Are there classes on Friday?
<i>Dāngrán, měitiān dōu yǒu kè.</i>	<i>Of course, there are classes everyday.</i>
Yǒu zuòyè ma?	Any homework?
<i>Dāngrán yǒu zuòyè, měitiān dōu yǒu zuòyè.</i>	<i>Of course there's homework, there's homework everyday!</i>

#### b) Yídìng 'for certain; for sure'

Xīngqīliù yídìng méi kè ma?	Is [it] certain that there's no class on Sat.?
<i>Xīngqīliù, xīngqītiān yídìng méiyǒu kè.</i>	<i>For certain there are no classes on Saturday and Sunday.</i>



Yídìng is especially common in the negative, bù yídìng ‘not necessarily’, when it often stands alone. Frequently, bù yídìng can be followed by a comment beginning with yǒude ‘some’, literally ‘there are some of them [which]’:

Kǎoshì dōu hěn nán ma?  
*Bù yídìng. Yǒude hěn nán,  
 yǒude bù nán!*

Are the tests all difficult?  
*Not necessarily. Some are difficult,  
 some aren't.*

Xuéshēng yídìng hěn lèi ma?  
*Bù, lǎoshī hěn lèi, xuéshēng  
 bù yídìng.*

Are students necessarily always tired?  
*No, teachers are tired, students aren't  
 necessarily.*

### Exercise 9.

Express the following:

1. In all, you're taking 5 courses this semester, and they're all hard.
2. In Beijing, November isn't necessarily cold but July is certainly hot.
3. You have lots of classes on Tuesday and Thursday, but only one on Wednesday.
4. The lecture has 120 students, but the sections only have 12.
5. The mathematics teacher isn't too strict, but the tests are hard.
6. You don't have any more classes today.
7. You were nervous yesterday, but you're okay today.
8. The physics teacher's very strict, so I'm nervous in class.

### 3.11.4 Question words as indefinites

Question words in Chinese have two faces: they can function in questions (corresponding to the *wh-words* of English – ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, etc.), and they can function as indefinites (corresponding to ‘anyone’, ‘anything’, ‘anywhere’, etc.) So shénme, in addition to its interrogative use, can also mean ‘anything’ in a non-interrogative context. The sense is often ‘anything in particular’:

Méi shénme wèntí.

[I] don't have any questions [in particular].

Méi shénme gōngkè.

[We] don't have any homework  
[in particular].

Xièxie nǐ lái jiē wǒ.  
*Méi shénme. Hěn jìn!*

Thanks for coming to pick me up.  
*[It]'s nothing – it's close by.*

Duìbuqǐ, nǐ xìng shénme, wǒ wàng le.  
*Méi shénme. Wǒ xìng Zōu.*

Sorry, what was your name – I've forgotten.  
*That's all right. My surname's Zou (sic!)*

Many more examples of question-words used as indefinites will be encountered in later units.

### 3.12 Dialogue: courses and classes

*Jiǎ and Yǐ are classmates at school, chatting over breakfast before going to class.*

Jiǎ Èi, nǐ hǎo, jīntiān zěnmeyàng? Hi, how are you? How's it going today?

Yǐ Hái hǎo, hái hǎo. Fine, fine.

Jiǎ Nǐ jīntiān máng bu máng? You busy today?

Yǐ. Hěn máng! I am!

Jiǎ. Wèishénme? How come?

Yǐ. Yīnwèi yǒu kǎoshì. Because I have a test.

Jiǎ. Yǒu shénme kǎoshì? What test?

Yǐ. Zhōngwén kǎoshì. A Chinese [language] test.

Jiǎ Nà míngtiān ne? Well how about tomorrow?

Yǐ Míngtiān méiyǒu. Míngtiān hái hǎo. None tomorrow, tomorrow's fine.

Jiǎ Yǒu gōngkè ma? Do [you] have any homework?

Yǐ Yǒu, dāngrán yǒu. Sure, of course [we] do.

Jiǎ Zhōngwén, gōngkè duō bu duō? Is there a lot of homework in Chinese?

Yǐ Hěn duō, kěshi hěn yǒuyìsi! There's a lot, but it's interesting!

Jiǎ Hěn nán ba! It must be difficult!

Yǐ Bú tài nán, hái hǎo. It's not so bad, it's fine.

Jiǎ Nǐ hái yǒu shénme biéde kè? What other classes do you have?  
(you still have what other classes)

Yǐ Jīntiān, hái yǒu wùlǐ, shùxué, I still have physics and maths today,  
míngtiān yǒu lìshǐ. tomorrow I have history.

Jiǎ Zhōngwén měitiān dōu yǒu ma? Do you have Chinese everyday?  
(Chinese daily all have Q)

Yǐ	Xīngqīyī dào sì dōu yǒu, xīngqīwǔ méiyǒu.	Everyday [from] Monday to Thursday, not on Friday. (Monday to Thurs all have, Friday not-have)
Jiǎ	Zhèi ge xuéqī yígòng shàng sì mén kè ma?	You're taking 4 courses altogether this semester? ('this M term altogether take...')
Yǐ	Yígòng shàng wǔ mén, hái yǒu tǐyù. Kěshì tǐyù méi shénme gōngkè.	Five altogether; there's PE as well. But PE doesn't have any homework.
Jiǎ	Wǔ mén kè, yíding hěn lèi!	Five courses, [you] must be tired!
Yǐ	Hái kěyǐ.	[I] manage.

*Variations:**Instead of: Nǐ jīntiān máng bu máng?*

Jīntiān nǐ jǐn<zhāng> bù jǐnzhāng?	Are you nervous today?
Jīntiān nǐ lèi bu lèi?	Are you tired today?
Jīntiān hǎo ma?	Are things okay today?
Nǐ shū<fu> bù shūfu?	Are you comfortable?

*Instead of: Yǒu kǎoshì.*

Yǒu gōngkè.	There's/[we] have homework
Yǒu zuòyè.	There's/[we] have an assignment.
Yǒu bàogào.	There's/[we] have a report.
Yǒu shíyàn.	There's/[we] have a lab.

**Exercise 10.**

Here are some sentences written by students learning Chinese; identify the likely mistakes and explain (if you can); then correct them.

1. \*Wǒmen hái méi chī le.
2. \*Méiyǒu kǎoshì míngtiān.
3. \*Zhōu, nǐ è bu è?
4. \*Míngtiān yǒu shénme kǎoshì? / Míngtiān méiyǒu.
5. \*Chī fàn le ma? / Hái méi ne? / Wǒ yě. ('Me neither!')
6. \*Tā hěn hǎochī.
7. \*Míngtiān shémme kǎoshì nǐ yǒu?

### 3.13 Sounds and Pinyin

#### 3.13.1 Tone combos (the last three sets)

13	14	15
kāfēi	bù nán	Táiwān
fēijī	dàxué	Chéngdū
cāntīng	shùxué	zuótiān

#### 3.13.2 Initials

Recall your initials chart, and the complementary distribution of initial and rhymes for rows 3 and 4 on the one hand, and 5 on the other:

3,4	-i is never 'ee'	-u is 'oo', never 'yu'
	zì      zhì	zū (zūn...)      zhū (zhūn...)
	cì      chì	cū (cūn...)      chū (chūn...)
	sì      shì	sū (sūn...)      shū (shūn...)
	rì	rú (rún...)
5	-i is 'ee only'	-u is 'yu' never 'oo'
	jì (jiē, jiān...)	jū (juē, juān...)
	qì (qiē, qiān...)	qū (quē, quān...)
	xì (xiē, xiān...)	xū (xué, xuān...)

#### Exercise 11.

a) Write lines 3, 4, and 5 of your initial chart (z, c, s etc.) on a small sheet of paper, one for every three students. Then, as your teacher recites the list of words twice, determine by consensus which initial is involved:

[Samples: xie, chu, xi, qu, su, shu, zhun, jun, xian, ci, shuai, xu, cai, shi, xi, shun etc. ]

b) By column, read aloud the following sets

yī	èr	sān	sì	wǔ	liù	qī	bā	jiǔ	shí
dou	zh!uo	gou	tuo	lou	po	zou	sh!uo	r!ou	mo
duo	zh!ou	guo	tou	luo	pou	zuo	sh!ou	r!uo	mou

Notice that row-5 initials do not appear in this exercise; why is that?

c) Practice reading the following sets aloud:

- |    |       |   |       |   |      |   |      |   |       |
|----|-------|---|-------|---|------|---|------|---|-------|
| 1) | rè    | > | lè    | > | hé   | > | è    | > | kě.   |
| 2) | rén   | > | bèn   | > | hěn  | > | gēn  | > | mén.  |
| 3) | mèng  | > | lěng  | > | pèng | > | gèng | > | fēng. |
| 4) | zhāng | > | cháng | > | pàng | > | tàng | > | ràng. |
| 5) | hǎo   | > | zhào  | > | pǎo  | > | mǎo  | > | zǎo.  |
| 6) | xiè   | > | bié   | > | jiè  | > | tiē  | > | liè.  |
| 7) | lèi   | > | bēi   | > | méi  | > | fēi  | > | zéi.  |
| 8) | lái   | > | tài   | > | mǎi  | > | pái  | > | zài   |

### 3.14 Summary

Numbers	yībǎiwàn (~ yībǎiwàn)
M-words	yì bēi chá; yí ge bēizi
Nationality	Nǐ shì nǐ guó rén? Tā shì cóng shénme dìfāng lái de?
Ever been?	Nǐ qù-guó Zhōngguó ma? / Méi qù-guó.
Miles away	Jíchǎng lí wǒ jiā zhǐ yǒu sān lǐ <lù>.
NSEW	Běijīng zài Zhōngguó běibīānr; Wúhàn zài zhōngbù. Yuènnán zài Zhōngguó de nánbiānr.
Confirmation	Nǐ shì dì-yī ma? / Shì de; Tā bú shì Měiguó rén ba. / Shì. Jīntiān shì hěn rè!
Tag-Qs	Nǐ de sǎn, shì bu shì?
Thanks	Xièxie. / Bié kèqì.
Sorry	Duìbuqǐ. / Méi guānxi.
Refusal	Hē yìdiǎnr shénme? / Bú yòng le, hái hǎo.
Don't forget	Nǐ de sǎn, bié wàng le.
Why?	Wèishénme hěn máng? / Yīnwèi yǒu hěn duō kǎoshì.
Lots of	Zhōngwén zuòyè hěn duō; Zhōngwén yǒu hěn duō zuòyè.
How many?	Yǒu duōshao xuéshēng? Jǐ ge lǎoshī? Duōshao qián? / Liǎng kuài.
Prices	Píngguǒ duōshao qián yì jīn?
Telephone	Nǐ de diànhuà shì duōshao?
Week days	Lǐbàiwǔ méiyǒu kè.
Siblings	Yǒu xiōngdì-jíemèi ma?
All together	Yíqǐ yǒu/shàng/xiū jǐ mén kè?
Classes	Jīntiān hái yǒu jǐ táng kè?
Any	Méi shénme wèntí.
Other	Hái yǒu shénme biéde kè?

**Exercise 12.**

Distinguishing words. Read each row aloud, then provide a distinguishing phrase for each word, eg, for the first set: Wǒ bù *shūfu*; Gāo *shīfu*, hǎo; *Shùxué* hěn nán ba.

1.	shūfu	shīfu	shùxué	shūbāo
2.	lǎoshī	kǎoshì	lishǐ	kěshi
3.	gōngkè	kèqi	yígòng	gōnglǐ
4.	xīngqīyī	xīngqījǐ	xínglǐ	xìng Lǐ
5.	měitiān	tiānqì	zìdiǎn	tǐng hǎo
6.	zàijiàn	zuìjìn	jǐnzhāng	zài zhèr
7.	qián	xiānsheng	hǎoxiàng	xuésheng
8.	xìng	xíng	xínglǐ	qǐng
9.	xiànzài	xǐzǎo	zǒngshi	hǎochī
10.	búguò	bú guì	bù gāo	bǐjiào
11.	cóngqián	cāntīng	gōngjīn	gāodiǎn
12.	qùguo	chīguo	qí ge	kèqi

### 3.15 Rhymes and Rhythms

#### *Heads up!*

Dàtóu, dàtóu,  
xiàiyǔ, bù chóu;  
biérén yǒu sǎn,  
wǒ yǒu dà tóu.

Big-head, big-head,  
falls rain, not worry;  
other-people have umbrella,  
I have big head.

Sheila Yong, from Boston University, made up an equally good – or better – version:

Tūtóu, tūtóu,  
dà fēng, bù chóu;  
biérén luàn fà,  
wǒ béng shūtóu!

Bald-head, bald-head,  
big wind, not worry;  
other-people messy hair,  
I no-need comb-head!

#### *On the money!*

Sānlúnchē, pǎo+de kuài,  
shàngmiàn zuò <yí> ge lǎo tàitai;  
yào wǔ máo, gěi yí kuài,  
nǐ shuō qíguài bù qíguài?

3-wheel-vehicle, runs+DE fast,  
top-side sits old woman;  
[driver] wants 5 dimes, [she] gives a dollar,  
you say strange or not?

## Appendix: Countries and nationalities

Addition of rén to the country name regularly gives the name of the person from that country.

### Countries (Guójiā)

China	Zhōngguó	Taiwan	Táiwān
Singapore	Xīnjiāpō	Japan	Rìběn
Indonesia	Yinní	Vietnam	Yuènnán
Thailand	Tàiguó	Burma=Myanmar	Miǎndiàn
India	Yìndù	Pakistan	Bājīstān
Bangladesh	Mèngjiālā	(S) Korea	Hánguó
(N.) Korea	Cháoxiǎn	Philippines	Fēilǚbīn
Ireland	Ài'ěrlán	USA	Měiguó
Canada	Jiānádà	Mexico	Mòxīgē
Brazil	Bāxī	Argentina	Āgēntíng
Australia	Àodàliya	New Zealand	Xīn Xīlán
South Africa	Nánfēi	Nigeria	Níriliyà
Egypt	Āijí	Iran	Yīlǎng
Afghanistan	Āfùhàn	England/UK	Yīngguó
Spain	Xībānyá	Germany	Déguó
Italy	Yìdàlì	France	Fǎguó (some: Fàguó)
Russia	Éguó (some: Èguó)	Greece	Xīlǎ
Israel	Yǐsèliè	Iraq	Yīlǎkè

### Cities (chéngshì)

Shanghai	Shànghǎi	Hong Kong	Xiānggǎng
Beijing	Běijīng	Shenyang	Shěnyáng
Canton	Guǎngzhōu	Shenzhen	Shēnzhèn
Beidaihe	Běidàihé (a resort on the coast near Beijing)		
Qingdao	Qīngdǎo	Tianjin	Tiānjīn
Chungking	Chóngqìng	Si-an	Xī'ān
Nanking	Nánjīng	Kunming	Kūnmíng
Gweilin	Guǐlín	Lhasa	Lāsà
Tokyo	Dōngjīng	Osaka	Dàbǎn
Seoul	Hànchéng ~ Shǒu'ěr	Jakarta	Yǎjiādá
Kuala Lumpur	Jílóngpō	Bangkok	Màngǔ
Hanoi	Hénèi	Saigon	Xīgòng
Delhi	Délì	Calcutta	Jiā'ěrgēdǎ
Manila	Mǎnílā	Dacca	Dákǎ
Mumbai/Bombay	Mèngmǎi	Baghdad	Bāgédá
Boston	Bōshìdùn	Chicago	Zhījiāgē
New York	Niǔ Yuē	Philadelphia	Fèichéng
Washington	Huáshèngdùn	San Francisco	Jiùjīnshān
Los Angeles	Luòshānjī	Salt Lake City	Yánhúchéng

Houston	Xiū ~ Háosīdùn	Dallas	Dálāsī
London	Lúndūn	Manchester	Mànchèsītè
Glasgow	Gèlāsēgē	Belfast	Bèi'ěrfāsītè
Dublin	Dūbólin	Paris	Bālí
Rome	Luómǎ	Athens	Yádiǎn
Cairo	Kāiluó	Tel Aviv	Tèlāwéifū
Sydney	Xīní	Perth	Bōsī

### Notes on country and city names

*Korea.* The PRC calls (North) Korea Cháoxiǎn, while Taiwan and overseas communities call (South) Korea Hánguó. Cháoxiǎn is a Chinese version of what is usually rendered Choson in English, the name of the dynasty that came to an end in 1910. Hán (distinct from falling toned Hàn of Hànrén ‘Chinese’) is also a traditional name, historically applied to ‘states’ on the south and western parts of the Korean peninsula. In the past, the name Gāoli was also applied, based on the same root that gave us the name Korea; cf. the Koryo dynasty. Paradoxically, the capital of S. Korea, Seoul, was until very recently called Hànchéng in Chinese – Hàn not Hán; nowadays, Seoul is transliterated as Shǒu’ěr.

*San Francisco.* The Cantonese name, pronounced Sānfānshì (shì ‘city’) in Mandarin, is obviously a transliteration of the English. The name commonly used in Mandarin, Jiùjīnshān means literally ‘old gold mountain’, a reference to Gold Rush days, when numerous Chinese migrated to California from the coast of Canton province.

*Huáshèngdùn.* Also referred to in the US Chinese newspapers as Huáfū ‘national capital’.

*Paris and Bali.* If Paris is Bālí, you may wonder what the Chinese name for the island of Bali [Indonesia] is. It’s also Bālí. The distinction is made by adding dǎo ‘island’ to the latter: Bālídǎo. Cf. Hǎinándǎo ‘Hainan Island’ (off the southern coast of China).

*Philadelphia.* Fèichéng. Chéng is ‘city’ (originally ‘wall,’ a feature characteristic of cities). Fèi is a rendering of the first syllable of Philadelphia.

*Tokyo.* Dōngjīng, literally ‘eastern capital’; cf. Běijīng ‘northern capital’ and Nánjīng ‘southern capital’.

*Russia.* Éluósī or Èguó on the Mainland, but often Èguó in Taiwan. The USSR was called Sūlián, ie Sū from Sūwéi’āi ‘Soviet’ + lián meaning ‘unite’.

*Canton, Chungking, Nanking, Peking etc.* English spellings of Chinese names are not as irrational as they may at first seem. These spellings reflect spelling conventions adopted by the British and probably based on Cantonese pronunciation. In the Wade-Giles transcription, which still has some currency, the distinction between (pinyin) b, d, g and p, t, k etc. was represented as p, t, k and p’, t’, k’, respectively. In common practice, the apostrophes were omitted, hence Peking, Taipei, the Tao Te Ching (the Taoist classic) rather than pinyin Beijing, Taibei, Dao De Jing (the Daoist classic). The name ‘Canton’ is based on the name of the province, Guǎngdōng, rather than the city, Guǎngzhōu.



### 第三課 Dì-sān kè

#### Lesson 3

三人行，必有我師焉。

Sān rén xíng, bì yǒu wǒ shī yān.

*[Among] three people walking, surely exist my teacher among+them.*

*[Even] a party of three will surely include one from whom I can learn.*

*Confucius, The Analects (Classical Chinese)*

### 3.0 Review

#### a) Fántǐzì

- 馬： 你好，我是馬小東。
- 王： 哦，馬小東，我是王老師。
- 李： 王老師，您好，我是李明。
- 王： 李明，你好。
- 李： 還有他呢，他姓毛，叫毛明。
- 王： 毛明，你好。三個人了。你呢？
- 張： 我是張生明。
- 王： 張生明，你好。那好，歡迎你們來北京。
- 馬, 李...: 謝謝。
- 王： 你們很累吧。
- 馬, 李...: 不累，還好。
- 王： 餓嗎？吃飯了嗎？
- 馬, 李...: 不餓，在飛機上吃了。
- 王： 那，你們的行李呢？

- 馬, 李...: 在這兒, 一二三四五。都在這兒。
- 王: 那好, 我們走吧, 上車吧。
- 馬, 李...: 好, 好。
- 王: 今天有一點兒熱, 你們熱嗎?
- 馬, 李...: 不熱, 還好。
- 王: 行李, 雨傘, 書包呢?
- 馬, 李...: 都在這兒。
- 王: 好, 那我們走吧。

**b) Radicals and phonetics**

Try to recall characters from Units 1 and 2 that have the following character-istics:

1. Two containing the phonetic element 乍 (zhà):
2. Two containing the element 隹 (zhuī):
3. Two containing zǒuzhīpáng, the movement radical (whose independent form is 辵):
4. Three containing kǒuzipáng (口), the mouth radical:
5. Two containing mùzipáng (木), the tree radical:
6. One with zuǒ'ěrduō ('left ear') as radical, and one with yòu'ěrduō:
7. One with jiǎosīpáng ('twisted silk beside'), and two with silk on the bottom:
8. One with sāndiǎnshuǐ (the water radical) and one with the ice radical:

**c) Add a character before or after (as indicated) to form a word or phrase:**

- |   |        |   |        |
|---|--------|---|--------|
| 1 | 可 ____ | 5 | ____ 经 |
| 2 | 学 ____ | 6 | ____ 报 |
| 3 | 书 ____ | 7 | ____ 典 |
| 4 | 中 ____ | 8 | ____ 以 |

## 3.1 First set

名字	叫	地方	美	吧
3+3 3+3	3+2	3+3 4+0	3+5	3+4
míng zì	jiào	dì fāng	měi	ba
name-character	be named;	place region	beautiful	BA
name	be called; call		[USA]	consensus

國	英	過	氣	想	去	兩
3+8	4+5	3+9	4+6	4+9	2+3	2+6
国	英	过	气			两
3+5	3+5	3+3	4+0			1+6
guó	yīng	guò	qì	xiǎng	qù	liǎng
country	hero	pass	air; spirit	think;	go	2 [+M]
	[England; UK]	ever		feel like		

## Notes

- a) 名 contains the elements 夕 ‘evening’ (originally a drawing of the setting moon?) and the ‘mouth radical’ (口); for mnemonic purposes, think ‘moon, low in the sky at evening, so you need to *call out your name* to identify yourself’.
- b) 字 zì ‘character’ contains 子 zǐ (‘child’) as phonetic; think ‘a pupil under a roof, studying characters’. (Míngzì means ‘the characters which form the name’.) Distinguish 字 from 子 zǐ and 了 le.
- c) 叫 mouth plus ‘4’, so: ‘*calling out* ‘4’ on the golf course’.
- d) 地 is a third character to show 也 as right-side element; cf. 她 and 他. The presence of 也 in these characters seems to have resulted from orthographic confusion, and does not represent its use as a phonetic element. 地 exhibits the radical form of 土 tǔ ‘earth, called tǔzipáng.
- e) 美 is a compound made up of 羊 ‘sheep; goat’ (with its stem truncated) and 大 ‘big’, and the usual ordering of its strokes (with 大 beneath truncated 羊) reflects that fact. 美 obeys the ‘rule of 5’ if the top two strokes are made to count as a horizontal.
- f) Like many of the other final particles (吗, 呢, 啊), 吧 is phonosemantic, with 巴 bā as phonetic, and 口 as radical.

- g) The inner part of 國, 或, is phonetic: huò. The simplified 国 (a Japanese innovation) has been formed with an entirely different inner constituent, 玉 yù (jade), which has neither a semantic nor a phonetic connection to the word guó.
- h) 英 contains 央 yāng as phonetic; the radical is cǎozitóu ‘grass character on top’, a combining form of the graph 艸. 美 měi ‘beautiful’ and 英 yīng ‘hero’ are selected for the country names of Měiguó and Yīngguó both for sound and for meaning. Students have observed the similarity of 英 to the shape of Britain (cǎozitóu representing Scotland, etc.)
- i) 過, with phonetic element shared by eg 鍋 guō (a word that comes into English through Cantonese as a ‘wok’, or ‘frying pan’), substitutes the non-phonetic (and semantically irrelevant but suitable simple) 寸 cùn ‘inch’ for the complicated 禹.
- j) 氣 has 气 as radical; also found with eg the gaseous elements, such as 氫 qīng ‘hydrogen’, 氦 hǎi ‘neon’ etc. The internal element in 氣 is 米 mǐ ‘(husked) rice’, so the compound graph suggests ‘steam rising from cooking rice’. The simplified form simply omits the internal element. Contrast 气, with two upper strokes, and 吃, with only one; ‘the other’s been eaten.’
- k) 想 contains the elements 相 as phonetic (seen also in 箱子 xiāngzi ‘trunk; box’) and 心 ‘heart’ as radical. 相, in turn, contains the basic components 木 ‘tree; wood’ and 目 ‘eye’, both pronounced mù. Think ‘sitting under a branch, eying the horizon, and *contemplating* the curvature of the earth’, hence ‘think; feel like’.
- l) 去 looks like a yacht ‘skimming across the water, *going* from island to island’.
- m) 兩/两 derives from a drawing of a balance (or pair of scales). The innards of the fántǐzì and jiǎntǐzì differ; the first has 入, which is also assigned as radical, but the second has 人, which is not the assigned radical; instead, the first stroke of the simplified character, the horizontal, is the assigned radical.

### 3.1.1 Phrases

名字	叫什么	地方	美国	美国人	走吧
míngzi	jiào shénme	dìfang	Měiguó	Měiguó rén	zǒu ba
英国	很想去	两个	天气	去过	有名
Yīngguó	hěn xiǎng qù	liǎng ge	tiānqì	qùguo	yǒumíng
好吧	没吃过	英国人	姓方的	看过	不对
hǎo ba	méi chīguo	Yīngguó rén	xìng Fāng de	kànguo	bú duì
哪国人	那个地方	中英字典	天气好了	英文	姓名
něiguó rén	nèi ge dìfang	Zhōng-Yīng zìdiǎn	tiānqì hǎo le	Yīngwén	xìngmíng

## 3.1.2 Short descriptions

1. 小白，女的，名字叫美文，中国人，去过美国；没去过英国，不过很想去。
2. 老高，男的，名字叫英明，美国人，去过中国，中文很好。
3. 周老师，男的，名字叫以天，中国人，昨天很紧张，现在好了。
4. 李四方，男的，中国来的，以前是小学的老师，现在是大学的。
5. 姓陈的，名字叫现中，英国的中国人，英文中文都很好；去过美国，很想上美国的大学。
6. 美国的天气，现在有的地方冷，有的地方热；中国呢，一样，有的地方冷，有的地方热。英国呢？

## Exercise 1

Answer the questions given below, according to the information given in the chart:

第-	姓	名字	男/女	哪国人？	今天怎么样？	吃过饭了没有？
1	王	美月	女	中国人	很累	还没吃过饭呢
2	高	太白	男	中国人	很忙	已经吃过饭了
3	陈	贵儿	男	美国人	现在好了	还没吃过饭呢
4	周	班贵	女	美国人	很紧张	吃过了
5	张	林生	男	中国人	很饿	还没吃饭呢
6	毛	在中	女	英国人	不冷不热	吃过了
7	林	明月	女	美国人	还好，不累	吃了

Questions

1. 姓高的名字叫什么？他是哪国人？他今天怎么样？他吃过饭了吗？
  2. 第一个人姓什么，名字叫什么？是女的吗？是什么地方来的？她今天怎么样？她吃过饭了吗？
  3. 陈贵儿是男的吧！是哪儿的人？他以前怎么样？现在呢？他吃过饭了没有？
  4. 姓毛的名字叫什么？在中是不是他的名字？他是美国人吧。你去过那个地方吗？他今天怎么样？他很饿吧!?
  5. 第七个姓林，对吗？那，她的名字是什么？她是哪国人？她吃过饭了吗？她怎么样？
  6. 那，第五个也姓林吗？是女的吗？是不是美国人？他饿不饿？他吃过了吗？
  7. 是不是有三个女的四个男的？有没有姓王的？有姓马的吗？
- 



“Sān rén tóng xíng, jiù gāi zhǎo ge dìfāng hē yì bēi...”

Cf. the citation from Confucius at the beginning of this lesson. [JKW 2005]

## 3.2 Second set

北 京 南 西 安 海

2+3, 1+4  
běi  
north

2+6  
jīng  
capital

2+7  
nán  
south

6+0  
xī  
west

3+3  
ān  
peace

3+7  
hǎi  
sea

外 到 近 省 川 州

3+2  
wài  
outside

2+6  
dào  
arrive; to

3+4  
jìn  
be close

5+4  
shěng  
province

1+2  
chuān  
(river)

1+5  
zhōu  
admin. div'n

從 離 遠 邊 錯 部

3+8

8+10

3+10

3+15

8+8

3+8

从 离 远 边 错

2+2  
cóng  
from

2+8  
lí  
dist. from

3+4  
yuǎn  
be far

3+2  
biān  
side

5+8  
cuò  
mistake; wrong

2+8  
bù  
part

## Notes

a) 北 běi could be said to resemble ‘two people sitting back to back for warmth against the cold *north* wind’, hence ‘north’. 北 can be contrasted with 比 (bǐ ‘compare; than’, as in 比较 bǐjiào), in which the two parts are in line (and therefore easier to *compare*).

b) 京, meaning ‘capital’. Think: ‘the gateway to the *capital* with a slit window and buttresses’. Chinese cities are oriented towards the south; the emperor sat with his back to the north. 南 nán ‘south’, then, might be said to be a drawing of ‘an elaborate *southern* gate to a city, with observation tower, wide opening, and customs check beneath’.

- c) 西安, literally ‘western peace’. Contrast 西 and 四 (and later 酒 jiǔ ‘liquor’, whose right side has an extra stroke). 安 shows 女 under a roof, for some ‘an image of *peace*’.
- d) 海 consists of 氵 (the water radical) plus 每 měi ‘each; every’, originally probably phonetic, and now also found in eg 悔 huǐ. Shanghai does not mean on the sea (which would be hǎishàng) but ‘rising to the sea’.
- e) 外 composed of 夕 xī ‘evening’ (seen also in 名) and 卜. Think of ‘the wall of the house, with the moon setting *outside*’.
- f) The right-hand element of 到 dào ‘arrive; to’ is the ‘knife-radical’ (dāozipáng), a combining form of 刀 dāo ‘knife’ that appears in characters for words having to do with cutting, as well as sharply demarcated events, such as ‘arriving’.
- g) 省 contains 少 shǎo and 目 mù ‘eye’ as radical. 州 zhōu was originally a representation of islands or high ground in a river valley, but came to refer to towns or administrative centers that grew up in such places. So it is a common second element for cities, eg 廣州 Guǎngzhōu, 蘇州 Sūzhōu, 杭州 Hángzhōu, 徐州 Xúzhōu. It is also used to translate ‘state’ in US state names: 加州 Jiāzhōu ‘California’, 德州 Dézhōu ‘Texas’, 康州 Kāngzhōu ‘Connecticut’. The original graph has been differentiated into 州 and 洲 (also zhōu), with the latter used as the second element in the names of continents, eg: 亞洲 Yàzhōu ‘Asia’ and 歐洲 Ōuzhōu ‘Europe’. 川, without the ‘islands’, shows just the river, and is an old word for ‘streams’, now associated only with the province of 四川, named for the four rivers which flow south into the Yangtze River.
- h) 從’s core meaning of ‘follow; obey’ is suggested by the two 人 in the upper right – which also form the basis of the simplified character (从).
- i) 離 is a particularly complicated character (with a total of 18 strokes). The simplified form (离) drops the traditional radical (隹) and assigns the first two strokes (on the top) as radical. That element can be viewed as ‘a diagram of a route, with the first two strokes and x marking the starting point, the lower box and its contents, the destination, and a line connecting the two, indicating *distance*’.
- j) 邊 with the ‘movement radical’ and a complex of three components: 自, 穴 and 方; the simplified graph seems to be based on the last of those three.
- k) 錯 cuò consists of the metal (or ‘gold’) radical 金 (cf. 錢) and an element, 昔, pronounced xī on its own, but also found in 曆 cuò and 措 cuò, where its phonetic value is clearer. 錯 has an ancient meaning of ‘grindstone’, which accounts for the metal radical and suggests an evolution from ‘burrs’ to ‘errors’.
- l) 遠 has 袁 yuán (a surname) as phonetic; the simplified form substitutes a simpler phonetic 元 yuán (the unit of Chinese currency). 近 combines the same ‘movement’ radical with the phonetic element 斤 jīn ‘catty’ (see below).



## 3.2.1 Phrases

北京	南京	西安	上海	西北
Běijīng	Nánjīng	Xī'ān	Shànghǎi	Xīběi
外国	到明天	从昨天	很近	北边
wàiguó	dào míngtiān	cóng zuótiān	hěn jìn	běi biān
四川	南方	四川省	广州	广东省
Sìchuān	nánfāng	Sìchuān shěng	Guǎngzhōu	Guǎngzhōu shěng
外国人	从什么地方	离这儿	不远	南部
wàiguó rén	cóng shénme dìfāng	lí zhèr	bù yuǎn	nán bù
不错	离北京	东北	东京	海边儿
bú cuò	lí Běijīng	dōngběi	Dōngjīng	hǎi biānr

## Exercise 2

Answer the questions based on the information given in the chart:

第-	姓	哪国人	什么地方	那个地方的天气	去过的地方
第八	毛	中国人	北京	有一点冷	英国
第二	林	中国人	上海	还好，不冷不热	-----
第一	张	英国人	西北	不错	中国
第九	陈	美国人	南边	很热	英国
第三	白	美国人	东北	有一点冷	中国
第七	周	英国人	中部	很好，很热	美国
第九	马	中国人	西安	昨天冷，今天好	美国
第四	李	美国人	北边	不太好	中国
第五	王	中国人	南京	昨天冷，今天好	-----
第十	方	中国人	四川	有一点热	东京
第六	安	中国人	广州	很热	海外

Questions

1. 第一个人姓什么？是哪国人？什么地方来的？那儿的天气怎么样？他去过英国吗？
  2. 第二个人是谁？是什么地方来的？那儿的天气是不是很热？他去过外国吗？
  3. 第三个姓什么？他是哪儿的人？那个地方的天气好不好？他去过英国吗？
  4. 第四个是中国人吗？他是哪国人？那儿的天气怎么样？他去过中国吗？
  5. 第五个姓什么？他是什么地方人？那个地方的天气怎么样？他去过外国吗？
  6. 第六个是不是姓安的？姓安的是哪国人？那儿的天气有点儿热吧！姓安的去过外国吗？
  7. 第七个姓什么？他是什么地方来的？那儿的天气很热吗？他去过美国吗？
  8. 第八个姓毛吧？是中国人吧？什么地方呢？那儿的天气呢？他去过美国没有？
  9. 第九个姓什么？是什么地方人？那儿的天气怎么样？他去过英国吗？英国天气怎么样？
  10. 第十个姓方吗？他是中国什么地方来的？你去过那个地方吗？那个地方天气怎么样？
-

## 3.2.2 Set 1 in fantizi

美國	去過	美人	天氣	不想去
Měiguó	qùguo	měirén	tiānqì	bù xiǎng qù
英國	什麼地方	天氣很熱	兩個人	叫什麼
Yīngguó	shénme dìfang	tiānqì hěn rè	liǎng ge rén	jiào shénme
吃過了	哪國人	天氣怎麼樣	起來了	
chīguo le	nǎi guó rén	tiānqì zěnmeyàng	qǐlái le	

## 3.3 Third set

別	忘	非	常	家	本
2+5	4+3	1+7	3+8	3+7	4+1
bié	wàng	fēi	cháng	jiā	běn
don't; other	forget	not	often	home; family	(root; stem)
說	得	電	話	碼	裏
7+7	3+8	8+5	7+6	5+10	6+7
说		电	话	码	里
2+7		1+4	2+6	5+3	7+0
shuō	de; děi	diàn	huà	mǎ	lǐ
speak; talk	DE; must	electric	words; lg	(number)	inside; in

## Notes

- a) 別 has the 'knife radical' on the right (cf. 到 dào 'arrive'). The core meaning is 'separate', with the knife suggesting a line of separation; hence 'other' and 'don't'.
- b) 忘 organizes the same components as 忙, ie the heart radical and the phonetic 亡 wáng, but arranges them vertically rather than horizontally. If 亡 on the right

side of the graph is ‘a container *busily* hoovering up things that need doing’, then placed above the heart, and empty, it represents ‘those things you *forgot* to do’.

c) 非, an older negative; the graph may represent two sides in opposition. 常 contains the cloth radical 巾 (said to be a drawing of a kerchief and also found in 帽子 màozi ‘hat’) and the phonetic element 尚 shàng, seen in 裳 shāng, 廠 chǎng, 當 dāng.

d) 家 contains 豕 shǐ, an archaic word for ‘pig’ (derived from a drawing) placed beneath the ‘roof radical’.

e) 木, now ‘wood’ but originally ‘tree’; 本 marks the stem or trunk, hence the M-word for ‘books’ (一本書), and by extension, ‘root; origin’ (本來).

f) 說 is sometimes printed as 説, with the upper right-hand strokes written as 入. 說 shuō, the verb, obviously needs to be distinguished from 話 huà, the noun. The latter contains 舌 shé ‘tongue’ (protruding from the mouth 口), so ‘words; language’. In many cases, you can be guided by the order of the words, verb+noun: 說話. But note that the reverse order can also appear in certain syntactic constructions, eg: 中國話說得很好。

g) 得 pronounced dé, is a verb meaning ‘obtain’; untoned, it is the particle (+de) that connects verbs with a SV phrases; pronounced děi, it is a modal verb meaning ‘have to; must’.

h) The form of the graph 裏 lǐ, with phonetic 里 lǐ inserted into the radical 衣 yī ‘clothing’ (cf. 褒 and 哀), recalls another sense of the word, ‘lining of clothes’, that is clearly related to the meaning ‘inside’. The graph is also written 裡, with the same components organized horizontally – the clothing radical on the left of the phonetic. The simplified graph isolates the phonetic element, with the result that the two words, lǐ ‘inside’ and ‘mile’ get written with the same graph, 里.



Kūnmíng: locksmith (电子配匙 diànzǐ pèi[yào]shì ‘electric match-key’) [JKW 2002]

## 3.3.1 Phrases

別人	忘了	別忘了	非常	日本
biérén	wàng le	bié wàng le	fēicháng	Rìběn
家里	都忘了	別客氣	說得很好	哪里
jiā lǐ	dōu wàng le	bié kèqì	shuō+de hěn hǎo	nǎlǐ
本來	以前	現在	二三得六	電話
běnlái	yǐqián	xiànzài	èr sān dé liù	diànhuà
號碼	非常好	三本書	沒有電話	我的家
hàomǎ	fēicháng hǎo	sān běn shū	méiyǒu diànhuà	wǒ de jiā
別說了	馬家	說得不好	不想去	不太有名
bié shuō le	Mǎ jiā	shuō+de bù hǎo	bù xiǎng qù	bú tài yǒumíng

## 3.3.2 Set 2 in fántǐzì

上海	外國	海邊	四川	不遠	很近
Shànghǎi	wàiguó	hǎi biān	Sìchuān	bù yuǎn	hěn jìn
北京	英國	四川省	南邊	離這兒	東北
Běijīng	Yīngguó	Sìchuān shěng	nán biān	lí zhèr	dōngběi
不錯	還好	從昨天	到今天	北部	中部
bú cuò	hái hǎo	cóng zuótiān	dào jīntiān	běi bù	zhōng bù
從什麼地方		廣州	東北邊	離西安很近	
cóng shénme dìfang		Guǎngzhōu	dōngběi biān	lí Xī'ān hěn jìn	

*Exercise 3. Questions on the following pairs of comment and response:*

- 王： 你的伞，别忘了。      李： 不是我的，我没有伞。
- 白： 我的手机呢？      周： 在我这儿。别忘了。
- 毛： 你家离这儿很远吗？      林： 不太远，两里。
- 张： 你中文说得很好。      高： 哪里，说得不好。
- 马： 你的电话号码呢？      方： 家里：5-6021; 手机：13501 102130
- 安： 你是中国人吧?!      林： 不是，我是日本人，日本东京人。
- 高： 广州天气怎么样？      周： 七月八月非常热，一月二月不错，  
不冷也不热。
- 张： 你的书包，别忘了。      毛： 不是我的，我的在家里。
- 李： 这儿有没有电话？      王： 这儿没有；学生中心有一个，  
你可以从这边去，不太远。
- 张： 你的字典，别忘了。      马： 哦，太好了，上课没有字典不行。

*Questions*

1. 小李有没有伞？
2. 伞现在在哪里？
3. 小白的手机在哪儿？
4. 林家离这儿远不远？
5. 姓高的中文说得怎么样？
6. 姓方的有手机吗？号码呢？
7. 姓林的是中国人吗？东京在日本什么地方？
8. 广州天气怎么样？

9. 姓毛的，书包在哪里？  
 10 学生中心离那儿远不远？  
 11 学生中心有没有电话？  
 12 上课，没有字典行吗？ 那，上班呢？
- 

## 3.4 Fourth set

喝 渴

3+9  
hē  
drink

3+9  
kě  
thirsty

多 少

3+3  
duōshao  
many

3+1  
few

斤 百

4+0  
jīn  
a catty

5+1  
bǎi  
100

杯 酒

4+4  
bēi  
cup

3+7  
jiǔ  
liquor

再

1+5  
zài  
again

瓜

5+0  
guā  
gourd

幾 塊 錢

3+9

3+10

8+8

几 块 钱

2+0  
jǐ  
how many

3+4  
kuài  
piece; \$

5+5  
qián  
money

見 茶

6+0

4+6

见 茶

4+0  
jiàn  
see; meet

3+6  
chá  
tea

## Notes

- a) 喝 hē and 渴 kě share the phonetic element 葛 gě. ‘Drink’ is suggested by 口 ‘mouth’, ‘thirst’ by 氵 ‘water’.
- b) 多少 is composed of the opposites ‘many’ and ‘few’; the former is made up of 夕 xī ‘evening’; the latter is based on 小 xiǎo ‘small’ (from which it needs to be distinguished). For 多, reduplication suggests *many*.
- c) 斤, was originally a drawing of an axe (now 斧 fǔ); early weights were apparently shaped like small axes, hence modern ‘catty’. For 百 ‘100’, cf. 白 ‘white; surname’.
- d) 杯 apparently composed of 木 and 不 (the latter possibly originally phonetic). ‘Cups are not made out of wood.’
- e) 酒 is composed of 氵 and 酉 yǒu (as phonetic). ‘Liquor in a bottle with a bung; the horizontal dash in the bottom is sediment.’
- f) 再 ‘again’: ‘a plunger for setting off explosives, blowing up bridges, which have to be built *again*’. Contrast 在 ‘at’. 見 ‘see’ is actually the same root as the 現 of 現在, the latter originally meaning ‘cause to be seen; be manifest’, hence ‘now’.
- g) 瓜, originally a drawing of a gourd on the vine (?), appears as radical in a few graphs for words associated with gourds (瓠).
- h) 幾: the radical is the top left cluster of three strokes. 幾 contains 戈 gē ‘spear’ on the right, also seen in 國. The simplified graph uses 几 jī ‘a stool; bench’, instead of the much more complicated 幾.
- i) 塊 composed of 土, the earth radical, with 鬼 guǐ as phonetic. 錢 is composed of 钅 ‘gold’, plus the element seen in characters such as 淺. The piled up ‘spears’ (gē) on the right can be regarded as ‘weapons guarding the *money*’.
- j) 茶, with the grass radical (on top) and a unique component on the bottom, which can be regarded as ‘a shed, where tea from bushes or trees (木) is drying’.

## 3.4.1 Phrases

喝什么	很渴	多少	不多	喝酒
hē shénme	hěn kě	duōshao	bù duō	hē jiǔ
不太渴	一百	喝茶	喝咖啡	一斤
bù tài kě	yībǎi	hē chá	hē kāfēi	yì jīn
多少钱	不少	不喝酒	两杯	杯子
duōshao qián	bù shǎo	bù hē jiǔ	liǎng bēi	bēizi
西瓜	木瓜	三块钱	再见	南瓜
xīguā	mùguā	sān kuài qián	zài jiàn	nánguā



几块钱	三块钱	钱不多	明天见	几个老师
jǐ kuài qián	sān kuài qián	qián bù duō	míngtiān jiàn	jǐ ge lǎoshī
多不多	一块西瓜	一杯三毛	非常多	三百块
duō bu duō	yí kuài xīguā	yí bēi sān máo	fēicháng duō	sān bǎi kuài
三百不多	西瓜好吃	一斤八毛	两百	中国白酒
sānbǎi bù duō	xīguā hǎochī	yì jīn bā máo	liǎng bǎi	Zhōngguó báijiǔ

## 3.4.2 Set 3 in fántǐzì

書包別忘了	非常熱	你的手機別忘了	非常累
shūbāo bié wàng le	fēicháng rè	nǐ de shǒujī bié wàng le	fēicháng lèi
電話號碼	說得不錯	筆還在家裏	日本
diànhuà hàomǎ	shuō+de bú cuò	bǐ hái zài jiā lǐ	Rìběn
非常緊張	中國西南邊	東西在家裏	天氣不錯
fēicháng jǐnzhāng	Zhōngguó xīnán biān	dōngxi zài jiā lǐ	tiānqì bú cuò
兩個東西	車子非常貴	從昨天到明天	非常餓
liang ge dongxi	chezi feichang gui	cong zuotian dao mingtian	feichang e
已經吃飯了不過還是很餓		說外國話很難	
yǐjīng chīfàn le búguò hái shì hěn è		shuō wàiguó huà hěn nán	
他有個日本人的名字		已經起來了，但是還沒吃飯	
Tā yǒu ge Rìběn rén de míngzi.		Yǐjīng qǐlai le, dànshi hái méi chīfàn.	

## Exercise 4

<u>东西</u>		<u>几块钱 / 多少钱</u>
西瓜	一个	四块二一斤
冬瓜	一块	三块五分钱一斤
南瓜	一个	四块八毛五一个
茶	一杯	五块四毛一杯
咖啡	一杯	一杯二十五块钱
白酒	一瓶 (píng)	一百十五块钱
汉(Hàn)英字典	一本	二十八块钱
英汉字典	一本	三十二块钱
杯子	一个	十八块
手机	一个	一百二十五块钱
伞	一把 (bǎ)	二十二块
笔	一只 (zhī)	两块五毛钱
中文报	一份 (fèn)	一块二
英文报	一份	六块八毛钱

## Questions

1. 西瓜好吃吗？多少钱一斤？那是不是有一点贵？
2. 英文，冬瓜怎么说？好吃吗？几块钱？一斤多不多？
3. 南瓜呢，美国南瓜很多，可是中国呢，中国也有南瓜吗？南瓜贵不贵？多少钱一个？你说一个南瓜有几斤？
4. 中国人喝茶，那美国人喝什么？你现在渴不渴？想喝一点什么？

5. 一杯茶几块钱？那，咖啡呢，一杯几块？咖啡更贵对吗？在美国咖啡也很贵吗？茶咖啡你都喝吗？
  6. 美国一块钱是中国几块？你去过中国吗？
  7. 你喝过中国白酒吗？好喝吗？白酒多少钱一瓶？
  8. 美国人吃饭喝不喝酒？中国人呢？
  9. 汉英字典多少钱？上课没有字典难不难？那，英汉字典呢？
  10. 一杯茶几块？一个杯子几块？酒杯是不是更贵？茶杯呢？
  11. 中国人说：“再见”，那美国人怎么说？
  12. 中国人说：“你渴吗？想喝一点什么？”美国人怎么说？
  13. 伞多少钱？那，伞在中国多少钱？
  14. 看过今天的报了吗？在这儿，报多少钱？在中国呢？你看过什么中国报吗？
- 



Barber at the Saturday market on the Dǎlǐ to Lǐjiāng road. [JKW 2005]

### 3.5 Creating new characters

Characters, you now know, represent words; and since words are constantly being added to spoken languages, there needs to be some way for new words to be represented in the writing system. In language, new words are typically formed from old by processes such as extension (‘shuttle’ extended from ‘part of a loom’ to ‘reusable spacecraft’), compounding (‘spaceship’), coinage (‘blooper’), borrowing (‘sputnik’), or sound symbolism (‘screech; blip’). In alphabetic languages, these can easily be represented in writing. But in logographic scripts, the process is more contrived. In Chinese, where new characters are needed (to represent new words) they are almost always formed on phonosemantic principles: a graph chosen for its suitable sound is combined with a radical of appropriate meaning. We can illustrate from the graphic representation of two types of words: onomatopoeia (words inspired by sound) and terms for chemical elements in the periodic table.

#### 3.5.1 Representing sounds – onomatopoeia.

A good source for onomatopoeia is *manga* style comics. [Incidentally, the word *manga* is a Japanese rendition of the Chinese mànhuà ‘comic; cartoon (unrestrained-drawing)’.] The list below contains a selection of graphic representations with their pronunciation. They are taken from comics published in Hong Kong in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though the comics are written in Mandarin, the language – and particularly the onomatopoeic expressions – may have been influenced by Cantonese, so some Chinese speakers may find items on the list strange or non-standard. Northerners, for example, might be more used to the expression pāchā (啪嚓) for ‘splash’ (as well as ‘crash’) than pāle (啪勒). But the point is that comics represent not only a genre in which the written language converges on the spoken, but one that is less subject to the usual prescriptions and constraints associated with writing and publication. Authors of comics (particularly in a place like Hong Kong in the late 90s) are freer to create their own words and use the resources of the written language to represent them as they see fit. The fact that graphs used to represent sounds in these comics are not all found in dictionaries (nor in printing sets) shows how productive the process of forming phono-semantic characters is.

As befits the genre of anime, onomatopoeia are usually drawn in highly stylized animated graphs whose very size and shape adds to the effect. In the examples below, the radical element is consistently the ‘mouth’ radical, 口, which has the effect of signaling that the graph represents a sound. (In the list, boxes □ appear where a version of the character with 口 is unavailable in the standard character set. Speakers may give different readings for the graphs, particularly their tones.)

<i>graph and pronunciation:</i>	<i>contains the phonetic element:</i>	<i>equivalent English noise, or event:</i>
啪 pā	拍 pāi	bang
啪嘞 pāle	拍, 勒 pāi, lè	exploding noise
嚓 cā	察 chá	screech
唧 jī	即 jī	spurt
彭 pēng	彭 péng	popping noise
叮 dīng	丁 dīng	light metallic noise; ping
噹 dāng	當 dāng	heavy metallic noise; bong
□ lóng	隆 lóng	reverberating noise; boing; boom
□ fú	伏 fú	swishing noise
□ shā	夏 xià	hissing or whizzing noise
□ kǎ	卡 kǎ	enormous crashing noise
波 bō	波 bō	rain drumming on the ground

### 3.5.2 Atomic elements

Characters also have to be created for more formal genres of writing. The periodic table of elements, for example, contains names of elements long known to Chinese science, such as mercury, 汞 gǒng (工 gōng over 水 shuǐ ‘water’) and lead, 鉛 yán. But there are also many recently discovered elements for which names have had to be provided. These names are created on the traditional pattern of phonetic and radical. So, for example, the first set below (all gasses) are compound graphs consisting of an appropriate phonetic element combined with the gas radical (气); the second set (all metals) are formed with the metal radical (金); and the third set (all stony or sandy elements) are formed with the stone radical (石).

	<i>graph</i>	<i>phonetic</i>	<i>radical</i>
Helium	氦 hài	亥 hài	气 gas
Neon	氖 nǎi	乃 nǎi	气 gas
Argon	氩 yà	亞 yà	气 gas
Thorium	鈾 tǔ	土 tǔ	金 metal
Palladium	鎳 pú	黠 pú	金 metal
Uranium	鈾 yóu	由 yóu	金 metal
Silicon	硅 guī	圭 guī	石 stone
Phosphorus	磷 lín	鄰 lín	石 stone
Sulphur	硫 liú	cf. 流 liú	石 stone

Notice that, unlike the graphs for onomatopoeia which are often the result of informal coinage, making use of imperfect phonetic elements, the graphs for new atomic elements (like other technical additions to the language) are formal coinages that display complete regularity. A reader unfamiliar with the name of a particular element can read off the pronunciation in terms of a common word with which s/he is sure to be familiar. Regardless of whether it proceeds formally or informally, the phono-semantic principle of character construction reduces the complexity of the writing system by reducing the amount of information needed to read or write it.

Note that while the compound construction of characters may be useful for native speakers encountering highly specialized words in written texts, or for language learners trying to find useful connections between characters that will allow them to retain them, the way a character is or has been constructed is unlikely to bear directly on the process of reading. Regardless of how they came to have their current form, characters are processed as words or parts of phrases, and even if the eye occasionally comes to rest on a character and sees the aptness of its form, such actions are – with the possible exception of reading certain kinds of poetry – a lapse from reading rather than part of the process.

### 3.6 Miscellany

#### 3.6.1 Set 4 in *fántǐzì*

喝酒	很渴	多少錢	一斤四塊
hē jiǔ	hěn kě	duōshao qián	yì jīn sì kuài
一百塊	南瓜很好吃	再見，明天見	白酒
yībǎi kuài	nánguā hěn hǎochī	zàijiàn, míngtiān jiàn	báijiǔ
幾塊錢	不多也不少	多少學生	茶杯
jǐ kuài qián	bù duō yě bù shǎo	duōshao xuéshēng	cháchēi
喝一點酒	去過酒吧嗎	喝太多不行	再說
hē yídiǎnr jiǔ	qùguo jiǔbā ma	hē tài duō bù xíng	zài shuō
酒杯	杯子裏有什麼	一杯兩塊五	幾個老師
jiǔbēi	bēizi lǐ yǒu shénme	yì bēi liǎng kuài wǔ	jǐ ge lǎoshī

## 3.6.2 Distinguish the following characters by citing words or phrases:

斤 - 今 - 近	在 - 再	美 - 没	钱 - 前
典 - 电 - 店	手 - 说	难 - 男	对 - 贵
不 - 还	我 - 饿	日 - 热	是 - 师
七 - 起	小 - 少	陈 - 车	伞 - 三
到 - 别	百 - 白	川 - 州	毛 - 笔
忙 - 忘	渴 - 可	一 - 以	本 - 杯

## 3.6.3 In the following compounds or phrases, provide the missing characters, which have similar or identical sounds:

- |            |        |            |         |
|------------|--------|------------|---------|
| 1. 车 __    | 名 __   | 9. 姓 __    | 一 __ 钱  |
| 2. 一块 __   | 以 __   | 10. __ 哪儿? | __ 见!   |
| 3. __ 有    | __ 国   | 11. __ 以   | 很 __    |
| 4. __ 这儿不远 | 在家 __  | 12. __ 机   | __ 话    |
| 5. __ 经    | 可 __   | 13. 上 __   | 很 __    |
| 6. __ 女    | 不太 __  | 14. __ 个   | 还没 __ 来 |
| 7. 号 __    | 好 __ ? | 15. __ 儿?  | __ 儿!   |
| 8. 一 __ 儿  | __ 话号码 | 16. __ 张   | __ 天    |

## 3.7 On the street #3



Intersection in Shànghǎi. [JKW 2005]

## a) Roads (illustrated above)

南京西路	Nánjīng Xī Lù	昌化路	Chānghuà Lù
北京西路	Běijīng Xī Lù	常德路	Chángdé Lù

## Notes

- 路 lù ‘road’, with 足 ‘foot’ as radical and 各 gè as an orphaned phonetic – one whose original motivation has been obscured by language change.
- 街 (not illustrated) jiē ‘street’, consisting of 行 ‘crossroads’ as radical and 圭 guī, another obscured phonetic.


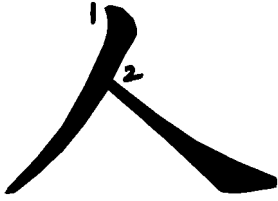




## b) Airlines

航空公司	hángkōng gōngsī ‘airline company’
中国航空公司	中国东方航空公司
中国北方航空公司	中国南方航空公司
中国西北航空公司	中国东方航空公司



## Stroke Order of Characters in Lesson 3

The number before each stroke indicates where the stroke starts as well as the stroke order.

		
měi	guó (T)	guó (S)
		
rén	yīng (T)	yīng (S)
		
jiào	míng	zì

## MIT 中文 I

## Lesson 3

		
ba	guò (T)	guò (S)
		
qì (T)	qì (S)	xiǎng
		
qù	dì	fāng
		
liǎng (T)	liǎng (S)	wài

## MIT 中文 I

## Lesson 3

		
běi	nán	jīng
		
xī	ān	hǎi
		
dào	jìn	shěng
		
chuān	zhōu	bù

		
cóng (T)	lí (T)	yuǎn (T)
		
cóng (S)	lí (S)	yuǎn (S)
		
biān (T)	cuò (T)	bié
		
biān (S)	cuò (S)	wàng

		
fēi	cháng	jiā
		
běn	de/dé/děi	bǎi
		
diàn (T)	huà (T)	shuō (T)
		
diàn (S)	huà (S)	shuō (S)

## MIT 中文 I

## Lesson 3

		
mǎ (T)	lǐ (T)	kuài (T)
		
mǎ (S)	lǐ (S)	kuài (S)
		
qián (T)	chá (T)	kě
		
qián (S)	chá (S)	hē

## MIT 中文 I

## Lesson 3

		
zài	jiàn (T)	jiàn (S)
		
guā	jīn	bēi
		
jiǔ	duō	shǎo
		
jǐ (T)	jǐ (S)	

## Unit 4

Hǔ sǐ liú pí, rén sǐ liú míng.  
 ‘Tiger dies leaves skin, person dies leaves name!’  
*Classical Chinese saying*

### Contents

4.1	Tone contrasts	
4.2	Existence and location	
4.3	Time phrases	<i>Exercise 1, 2</i>
4.4	DE revisited	<i>Exercise 3</i>
4.5	Names in detail	
4.6	Years	
4.7	Studying and working	<i>Exercise 4</i>
4.8	Forms of address	<i>Exercise 5</i>
4.9	Introductions	<i>Exercise 6</i>
4.10	Dialogue: on the bus to <i>Mianyang</i>	
4.11	Food (1)	
4.12	Pinyin: initial w and y	<i>Exercise 7</i>
4.13	Summary	<i>Exercise 8</i>
4.14	Rhymes and rhythms	

*Appendix 1: Courses of study and university names*

*Appendix 2: The 45 most common surnames*

### 4.1 Tone contrasts

Practice the following tonal contrasts by reading the columns of paired words. Place a short pause between each member of the pairs so as to keep their tonal contours distinct.

a)	– versus /	b)	– versus \	c)	/ versus v
	cōng   cóng cuō   cuó		cū   cù cūn   cùn		chú   chǔ chóu   chǒu
	jiā   jiá qiān   qián		jiāng   jiàng qī   qì		jiáo   jiǎo qíng   qǐng
	tiān   tián mō   mó		tōng   tòng niē   niè		tú   tǔ miáo   miǎo
	xiā   xiá shāo   sháo		xiāng   xiàng zāng   zàng		shéng   shěng zháo   zhǎo



## 4.2 Existence and location

### 4.2.1 Places

fànguǎn<r> food-hall restaurant	tǐyùguǎn PE-hall gymnasium	túshūguǎn map-book-hall library	lǚguǎn travel-bldg hotel; hostel
shūdiàn book-shop bookstore	shāngdiàn trade-shop shop; store	fàndiàn food-shop hotel	xǐshǒujiān wash-hands-room lavatory
cèsuǒ lean-place toilet; WC	zhāodàisuǒ reception-place guest house	bàngōngshì do-work-room office	yínháng silver-comp. bank
dìtiě ground-iron underground train	huǒchēzhàn train-station train station	sùshè lodge-inn dormitory	cāntīng food-hall cafeteria

#### Notes

a) Several generic words for various kinds of buildings or rooms are to be found in last position in a number of these compounds: jiān; guǎn; suǒ; shì; diàn; etc. Because these forms only occur in compounds (at least in modern Mandarin), it is difficult to give them distinct meanings, so the [syllable] glosses provided above are only suggestive.

b) Cèsuǒ ('leaning-place') is the standard word for 'toilet', and is often found on signs; xǐshǒujiān 'wash-hands-room' is the term commonly used in public buildings and hotels. (Cf. §4.2.4.)

c) In spoken language, fànguǎn<r> is often generic for restaurants, along with cānguǎn and càiguǎn (neither with the 'r' option). Dining halls or cafeterias at universities or businesses are often called cāntīng. However, other terms, including several that contain the word jiǔ 'wine', also appear in restaurant names. These include fānzhuāng 'food-place+of+business' [large restaurants], and jiǔjiā 'wine-house' and jiǔlóu 'wine-building' [the last two common in Hong Kong]. Words for hotel also vary. Lǚguǎn is generic for small, local hotels. Kèzhàn ('guest-shelter') is used for inns in picturesque regions such as Lijiang in northwest Yunnan. Large hotels of the sort deemed suitable for foreigners are often referred to as fàndiàn (which, as the name suggests, were originally known for their fancy restaurants). Chinese government offices, universities, and even businesses often have at their disposal zhāodàisuǒ 'hostels (reception-places)', with basic amenities, for official (non-paying) or other (paying) guests.

### 4.2.2 Locations

Earlier, in §2.7.3, you encountered a number of position words, like shàng 'on' and lǐ 'in', that could be attached to nouns to form location phrases to follow zài 'be at': zài fēijī shàng 'aboard the airplane', zài sùshè lǐ 'in the dormitory'.

When position words are used alone (directly after zài), with no reference noun, they have to appear in more substantial form, with suffixes miàn<r> ‘face; facet’, biān<r> ‘border; side’ or (more colloquially) tou (which, in its toned form, tóu, means ‘head’): zài fēijī shàng ‘on the airplane’, but zài shàngmian<r>, zài shàngbian<r>, or zài shàngtou, all ‘on top; above; on board’. The choice of the two-syllable position word is not ruled out by the presence of a reference noun. Rhythmic considerations play a role, with a single-syllable noun being more likely to attract a single-syllable position word; thus, jiā lǐ ‘in the house’ rather than jiā lǐtou, and shān shàng ‘on the hill’ rather than shān shàngtou. But that is a tendency rather than a hard and fast rule.

The repertoire of position words together with their possible suffixes is presented in the following table:

*Position nouns*

<i>combining form</i>	<i>rough meaning</i>	+ <i>mian</i> <r>	+ <i>tou</i>	+ <i>bian</i> <r>	<i>other</i>
shàng	on; above	shàngmian	shàngtou	shàngbianr	
xià	under; below	xiàmian	(xiàtou)	(xiàbianr)	dǐxia
qián	in front; before	qiánmian	qiántou	qiánbianr	
hòu	behind; after	hòumian	hòutou	hòubianr	
lǐ	in; inside	lǐmian	lǐtou	(lǐbianr)	nèi
wài	outside	wàimian	wàitou	wàibianr	
zuǒ	left			zuǒbianr	
yòu	right			yòubianr	
páng	next to; beside			pángbiānr	
dōng	east			dōngbianr	
nán	south			nánbianr	
xī	west			xībianr	
běi	north			běibianr	
	vicinity				fùjìn

*Notes*

- Though dǐxia is more common than xiàmian and the other xià-combinations, this may be a product of the slight difference in meaning between xià ‘below’ or ‘lower’ and dǐxia ‘underneath’; thus, shān xià ‘at the foot of the mountains’ but chēzi dǐxia ‘underneath the car’.
- While lǐ and its compounds are used for ‘in; inside’, nèi (with no compound forms) usually has a more abstract sense of ‘within’: guónèi ‘within the country’ (versus guówài); shìnnèi ‘in town’ (versus shìwài).
- Biānr, untuned in most combinations, is fully toned in pángbiānr ‘next to’.
- Zhōngxīn, literally ‘center (middle-heart)’, eg shì zhōngxīn ‘the town center’, xuésheng zhōngxīn ‘student center’.

To begin with, you can focus on some combinations of noun and position noun that are particularly common. Here are some examples, along with some other phrases that can act as locations (after zài):

lóushàng bldg upper upstairs	lóuxià bldg-below downstairs	shānshàng mtn-on on the mtn	shísìhào lóu lǐ 14 number bldg in building #14	fùjīn attach-near in the vicinity
chénglǐ city-inside in town	chéngwài city-outside out of town	gébi separate-wall next door		

#### 4.2.3 Existence versus location

As noted in Unit 2, the verb yǒu indicates existence, as well as possession. Existential sentences (‘there is/are’) in Chinese have the order: *Location – yǒu – item*.

<i>location</i>	<i>yǒu</i>	<i>item</i>	
Zhèr ~ zhèlǐ	yǒu	diànhuà	ma?
<Zhèr ~ zhèlǐ>	méiyǒu	<diànhuà>.	

Note that although zài is not usually present, the type of phrase that can constitute locations in this pattern are the same as those that typically follow zài, ie places (Běijīng), position words (qiántou, zuǒbianr) or combinations of noun and position words (jiā lǐ, shì zhōngxīn):

Shànghǎi yǒu dìtiě, kěshì Nánjīng méiyǒu.	There’s a metro in Shanghai, but not in Nanjing.
Zuǒbianr yǒu yí ge diànhuà.	There’s a phone on the left.
Huǒchēzhàn zài shì zhōngxīn ma? Fùjīn yǒu liǎng ge huǒchēzhàn: yí ge zài shì zhōngxīn, yí ge zài chéngwài.	Is the train station in the town center? There are 2 stations in the vicinity: one’s in town, one’s out of town.

In many cases, a question about existence will elicit a response *about location*. Location, as noted earlier, is conveyed by a pattern built around zài, with the thing to be located mentioned before the position noun: zài chéngwài ‘out of town’.

<i>item</i>	<i>zài</i>	<i>location</i>
Diànhuà	zài	nǎr?
<Diànhuà>	zài	lóushàng.

#### Usage

Zhèr yǒu xǐshǒujiān ma?	Is there a ‘lavatory’ here?
Yǒu, xǐshǒujiān zài hòutou.	Yes [there is]; the lavatory’s in the back.

Qǐngwèn, yǒu méiyǒu cāntīng?  
Yǒu, zài gébì.

Is there a cafeteria?  
Yes, there is, [it]'s next door.

Wèi lǎoshī de bàngōngshì ne?  
Zài lóushàng.

And [where's] Prof. Wei's office?  
Upstairs.

Zhèr fùjìn yǒu fànguǎnr ma?  
Yǒu, lí zhèr bù yuǎn.

Are there any restaurants around here?  
There are, not far away.

Qǐngwèn, dìtiě zài nǎlǐ?  
Dìtiě ne, dìtiě zài qiánmian –  
bù yuǎn.

May I ask where the Metro is, please?  
The Metro, the Metro's ahead – not far.



Qǐngwèn, dìtiě zài nǎlǐ? [JKW 2004]

Zhèr fùjìn yǒu cèsuǒ ma?  
Lóuxià hǎoxiàng yǒu.

Is there a toilet around here?  
Seems there's one downstairs.

Liúxuésēng sùshè zài nǎr?  
Liúxuésēng sùshè zài Xuésēng  
Zhōngxīn pángbiānr.

Where's the foreign student dorm?  
The foreign student dorm is next to the  
Student Center.

Shūdiàn zài nǎr?  
Shūdiàn dōu zài chéng lǐ.

Where's the bookshop?  
The bookshops are all in town.

Qǐngwèn, diànhuà zài nǎr?  
Diànhuà ne, diànhuà zài nàr,  
zài zuǒbiānr.

May I ask where the phone is?  
The phone's over there – on the  
left.

## Note

Liúxuéshēng, literally ‘remain-students’, are students studying abroad (‘overseas students’). At Chinese universities, they are frequently placed in a single dormitory or dormitory complex, often with better facilities.

## 4.2.4 Comfort stations

Traditionally, as expected from a society where the majority of people have been farmers and human waste has been an important fertilizer, Chinese have generally been less prone to create euphemisms about the waste products of the human body and the places where they are deposited. As noted above, the most common term nowadays for the latter is cèsuǒ. However, hotels and fancy restaurants are more prone to euphemisms such as xǐshǒujiān ‘lavatory (wash-hands-room)’ or guànxǐshì ‘bathroom’; and the urban middle classes, particularly in Taiwan and overseas communities might also use huàzhuāngjiān ‘powder room (make up-room)’ or wèishēngjiān ‘(hygiene-room)’. The latter is abbreviated in house listings, such as sānshì liǎngwèi or sānfáng liǎngwèi, both ‘3 rooms, 2 bathrooms’. Examples:

Qǐngwèn, cèsuǒ zài nǎr?  
Zài hòubianr de yuànzi lǐ.

Where’s the toilet, please?  
In the back yard.

Qǐngwèn, zhèr yǒu méiyǒu cèsuǒ?  
Cèsuǒ ne, hǎoxiàng zài lóuxià.

Excuse me, is there a toilet [around] here?  
A toilet...uhm, [I] believe it’s downstairs.

Qǐngwèn, zhèr yǒu xǐshǒujiān ma?  
Xuésheng Zhōngxīn yǒu.

Excuse me, is there a lavatory here?  
There’s one in the Student Center.

In the countryside, you are also likely to hear máofáng ‘outhouse (thatched-house)’. The actual item, the bowl – the commode – is mǎtǒng ‘horse-tub’ or gōngtǒng ‘public-tub’. The acts are sāniào ‘to piss (release urine)’, niàoniào ‘to urinate; piss’, or more euphemistically, xiǎobiàn, literally ‘small-convenience’, which can be a noun ‘urine’ as well as a verb ‘urinate; pee’. Its larger complement is, unsurprisingly, dàbiàn N ‘excrement’ or V ‘to defecate’. The less euphemistic version is lā shǐ ‘to shit (pull shit)’. While it is interesting to know the gritty details, as a novice, you should probably limit yourself to questions about location, of the kind illustrated above; if someone needs to know ‘what kind’, then xiǎobiàn and dàbiàn are appropriate: qù xiǎobiàn, qù dàbiàn.

## 4.2.5 Born, grow up and live

In examples seen so far, zài phrases have preceded their associated verbs: zài fēijī shàng chī le. However, such is not always the case. With verbs of shifting (such as fàng ‘put’), the zài-phrase appears after the verb (as a destination). And some verbs allow both pre- and post-verbal position of zài-phrases. This is true of the common verbs shēng ‘be born’, zhǎng ‘grow up’ and zhù ‘live; reside’. But because the pre-verbal position has grammatical consequences that will not be properly introduced until a later unit, here we will focus on the post-verbal position, that is quite appropriate for making some introductory biographical notes:

Tā shēng zài Běijīng, yě zhǎng  
zài Běijīng, kěshì xiànzài zhù zài  
Xī'ān.

She was born in Beijing and grew up in  
Beijing, but now she lives in Xi'an.

Wǒ shēng zài Duōlúnduō, zhǎng  
zài Niǔ Yuē, xiànzài zhù zài  
Jiùjīnshān.

I was born in Toronto; I grew up in NY;  
and now I live in SF.

### 4.3 Time Phrases

#### 4.3.1 Topic--comment

Phrases conveying 'time when' (as opposed to duration), like those that convey location of action (as opposed to destination) also generally appear *before* their associated verb:

Tā zuótiān bù shūfu, kěshì jīntiān  
hǎo le.

He wasn't well yesterday, but he's  
okay today.

However, time phrases – but not usually location phrases – may also appear before the subject:

Zuótiān tā zěnmeyàng?  
Zuótiān tā bù shūfu, hěn lèi, yě hěn  
jǐnzhāng, suǒyǐ méiyǒu qù shàngkè.

How was she yesterday?  
Yesterday, she didn't feel well, [she] was  
tired and nervous, so [she] didn't go to  
class.

Lǐbàiwǔ wǒmen dōu méiyǒu kè.  
Xiètiān-xièdì!

None of us has class on Fridays.  
Thank heavens!

The difference – position before or after the subject – has to do with what you are talking about. Typically, first position in a Chinese sentence introduces the topic, and what follows is a comment on that topic:

Zuótiān tā zěnmeyàng?  
Zuótiān tā bù shūfu, jīntiān hǎo le.

[About yesterday:] How was he yesterday?  
He wasn't well yesterday, but he's fine today.

Tā zuótiān zěnmeyàng?  
Tā zuótiān juéde bù shūfu, hěn lèi,  
yě hěn jǐnzhāng.

[About him:] How was he yesterday?  
He didn't feel well yesterday; he was tired,  
and anxious.

#### 4.3.2 Clock time

##### a) The hours

Clock times are also 'time when' phrases, often appearing in conjunction with jīntiān, zuótiān or with words for divisions of the day like the following, based on roots zǎo 'early', wǎn 'late', and wǔ 'noon':

zǎoshàng  
morning

shàngwǔ  
mid-morning

zhōngwǔ  
noon

xiàwǔ  
afternoon

wǎnshàng  
evening

Like English, where the term ‘o’clock’ derives from ‘of the clock’, clock time in Chinese is based on the word zhōng ‘clock’ (originally ‘bell’). Zhōng is measured out by diǎn ‘dots; points’ (cf. yídiǎn ‘a bit’) to form phrases such as jiǔ diǎn zhōng (reduceable to jiǔ diǎn) ‘9 o’clock’. Time is questioned with jǐ: Jǐ diǎn zhōng? ‘What time is [it]?’ In asking or giving clock time, le is often present in final position, suggesting ‘by now’. Complex time phrases in Chinese move, like dates, from large units to small: zǎoshàng jiǔ diǎn ‘9 in the morning’; míngtiān xiàwǔ sān diǎn ‘tomorrow afternoon at 3’.

Xiànzài jǐ diǎn <zhōng> le? <i>Shí diǎn.</i>	What time is it now? <i>[It's] 10:00.</i>
---	--

Zǎoshàng jiǔdiǎn dào shídiǎn yǒu kè.	I have a class from 9 -10 in the morning.
---	---

Zhōngwén kè <shì> jiǔdiǎn dào shídiǎn.	Chinese class is 9 -10.
---	-------------------------

#### b) Details

Fēn, literally ‘divide; a part’, is used for minutes (as well as cents); seconds are miǎo – both are measure words (so they can be counted directly):

jiǔ diǎn shí fēn      9:10	sān diǎn sānshíwǔ fēn 3:35
shí'èr diǎn líng sì   12:04	liù diǎn shíwǔ fēn      6:15

The half hour is either 30 minutes (sānshí fēn) or bàn ‘half’ (after diǎn, the M-word):

Xiànzài jiǔ diǎn bàn le.	It's now 9:30.
Xiànzài jiǔ diǎn sānshí fēn le.	

Quarter to and quarter past are expressed with kè, literally ‘a cut’ (from the notch that marked the measuring stick on old water clocks): yí kè ‘quarter’. ‘Quarter past’ is yí kè (some say guò yí kè) added to the hour; ‘quarter to’ is chà yí kè ‘less by one quarter’, placed either before or after the (coming) hour. Older speakers, and people from Taiwan, sometimes use sān kè ‘three quarters’ for ‘quarter to’.

jiǔ diǎn <guò> yí kè	‘quarter past 9’
chà yí kè shí diǎn	‘quarter to 10’
shí diǎn chà yí kè	‘quarter to 10’

In general, time past the half hour can be expressed as a lack, using chà + minutes, placed either before or after the hour:

chà wǔ fēn shí diǎn	‘five to 10’
shí diǎn chà wǔ fēn	
chà yí kè sì diǎn	‘quarter to 4’
sì diǎn chà yí kè	

## Clock time – summary

Day and segment	to	hour	minutes (to/after)	<o'clock>
jīntiān zǎoshàng		yì diǎn	líng wǔ fēn	<zhōng>
zuótiān shàngwǔ		liǎng diǎn	shí fēn	
míngtiān zhōngwǔ		shí'èr diǎn	shíwǔ fēn ~ <guò> yí kè	
xiàwǔ		...	èrshíwǔ fēn	
wǎnshàng		...	sānshí fēn ~ bàn [sān kè]	
	chà shí fēn	...	chà shí fēn	
	chà yí kè	...	chà yí kè	
		Jǐ diǎn		<zhōng>?

In colloquial language, wǎnshàng extends until bedtime, even if it's very late; similarly, zǎoshàng is when you get up, even if it's very early:

Wǒ wǎnshàng liǎng diǎn shuìjiào, zǎoshàng shí diǎn qǐlai,  
cóng shàngwǔ shíyī diǎn dào xiàwǔ sì diǎn yǒu kè.

Tiānwén kè shì xīngqī sì wǎnshàng    Astronomy ('heaven-inscription') class is  
shíyī diǎn dào liǎng diǎn.            Thursday evenings, 11 to 2 am.

Where needed, more specialized time words are available, of course, eg: yèlǐ 'in the night', bànyè 'at midnight; late at night', língchén 'very early in the morning; before dawn', qīngzǎo 'early morning'.

**Exercise 1.***Buying train tickets*

To buy a train ticket, you need to state the time and destination. Tickets are usually one-way, so that is not a variable. On short-distance express trains, such as the one from Shànghǎi to Nánjīng (stopping at Sūzhōu, Wúxī and Zhènjiāng), there is an option between soft seat (first class) and hard seat. But on long distance inter-city trains, there are commonly four types of ticket, plus a standing ticket.

yìngzuò ~ yìngxí 'hard-seat'            yìngwò 'hard-berth'  
ruǎnzuò ~ ruǎnxí 'soft-seat'            ruǎnwò 'soft-berth'  
zhànpào 'standing-ticket'

Zhànpào are sold (often for the same price) when yìngzuò ~ xí are sold out. Berths are 4 (ruǎnwò) to a cabin, or 6 (yìngwò) to a section, with egress to toilets and washrooms as well as dining car by way of a corridor along the station side of the carriage. A team of service staff (fúwùyuán) keep the cabins clean, make beds, sell snacks and reading matter, and on some lines, even rent out portable TVs and other electronic equipment for the duration of the journey.



It is possible to buy tickets through hotels up to three days in advance, and most travelers do that (paying a service fee, shǒuxùfèi ‘procedure-fee’). Buying at the station is more difficult. There, you generally have to work your way up to a small ticket window and state your needs succinctly, along the lines indicated below. Tickets are counted with zhāng, the measure for flat things (tables, maps, photographs, etc.)

<i>Place</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Chéngdū	shàngwǔ jiǔ diǎn	ruǎnwò	liǎng zhāng

Now practice buying tickets according to the specifications indicated:

1.	Xīníng	4:00 this afternoon	hard berth	1
2.	Xī’ān	8 tomorrow morning	soft seat	2
3.	Hūhéhàotè	7 this evening	soft berth	3
4.	Lánzhōu	2:30 this afternoon	hard seat	1
5.	Hā’ěrbīn	tomorrow morn. 7	soft seat	2
6.	Guìlín	this afternoon 3:25	hard berth	1
7.	Chóngqìng	July 7, 7:00 pm	soft berth	4



Yìngwò, nǐ juéde shūfu ma? [JKW 2003]

#### 4.3.3 Time of events (meals)

Meals are named by time of day added to roots such as fàn ‘rice; food; meals’, cān [tsān!] ‘meal’, or in the case of breakfast, diǎn ‘snack’ (cognate to yìdiǎn ‘a little’):

zǎofàn	zhōngfàn	wǎnfàn
zǎocān	zhōngcān	wǎncān
zǎodiǎn		

Recall that it is possible to express some uncertainty about time with the adverb dàgài ‘approximately; probably’. Other ‘hedging’ words include yěxǔ ‘maybe; probably; possibly’ and chàbuduō ‘approximately (less-not-much)’.

For now, it will only be possible to ask generic questions, such as ‘at what time do you eat breakfast’; questions about the past introduce a number of complications that will be dealt with later. So in addition to měitiān ‘everyday’ it will be useful to learn the following expressions, all built on cháng ‘often’, that have to do with habitual events:

cháng ~ chángcháng	often
píngcháng	usually
jīngcháng	frequently; often; regularly
tōngcháng	generally; normally

### Usage

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Zhōngguó rén píngcháng jǐ diǎn chī zǎofàn?</p> <p><i>Dàgài liù dào qī diǎn ba.</i><br/><i>Měiguó rén ne?</i></p> <p>Měiguó rén ne, jīngcháng jiǔ diǎn shàngbān. Yěxǔ qī diǎn bàn, bā diǎn chī zǎofàn.</p>                           | <p>What time do Chinese usually eat breakfast?</p> <p><i>About 6 to 7. How about Americans?</i></p> <p>Americans generally start work at 9. So maybe they eat breakfast at 7:30 [or] 8:00.</p>  |
| <p>2. Xuéshēng ne, yīnwèi hěn máng, chángcháng zhǐ hē kāfēi bù chī zǎodiǎn.</p> <p><i>Zhōngguó xuéshēng hěn shǎo shì zhèi yàng. Zhōngguó xuéshēng tōngcháng chī zǎodiǎn.</i></p> <p>Tāmen chī shénme?<br/><i>Chī xīfàn, miàntiáo.</i></p> | <p>Students, because they are so busy, they often just drink coffee and don’t eat breakfast.</p> <p><i>Chinese students are rarely like that. Chinese students regularly eat breakfast.</i></p> <p>What do they eat?<br/><i>Rice porridge, noodles.</i></p> |
| <p>3. Jǐdiǎn shàngkè? Jǐdiǎn xiàkè?</p> <p><i>Wǒmen chàbuduō shí diǎn shàngkè shíyī diǎn xiàkè.</i></p>   | <p>What time does class start? What time do [you] get out of class?</p> <p><i>We start class at about 10 and end at 11.</i></p>   |
| <p>4. Chīguo zǎofàn le méi?</p> <p><i>Hái méi ne.</i></p>   | <p>Have you eaten breakfast?</p> <p><i>Not yet.</i></p>   |

Nǐ bú shì jiǔ diǎn yǒu kè ma?  
Zěnméi hái méi chī zǎofàn ne?

Isn't it the case that you have class at 9:00?  
How come you haven't eaten breakfast yet?

Ai, wǒ bù xiǎng chī, wǒ hē  
kāfēi jiù xíng le.

I don't feel like [any], I'll just have  
coffee [and that'll be fine].

#### Notes

- a) Xīfàn 'watery-rice', a kind of gruel, to which pickles, preserved meats, vegetables and other items are added; similar to what is often called zhōu in some parts of the country.
- b) Miàntiáo 'wheat[flour]-lengths', generic for noodles.
- c) Nǐ bú shì... 'isn't it the case that...'
- d) Xiǎng 'think > feel like'

#### 4.3.4 Business hours

bàngōng shíjiān	office hours
yíngyè shíjiān	business hours

Most urban communities in China have long operated on international business hours, often with adjustment for a longer lunch hour than most English speaking countries. Business hours (banks, offices) vary with region, but typically they are M-F, 8:30 – 5:30. Shops often keep much longer hours, and stay open on the weekend. Lunch breaks can run from 12 – 1:30 or even 2:00. Any sort of official meeting begins punctually. Here, more for reference at this point, are some basic queries about business hours:

Yíngyè shíjiān jǐ diǎn dào jǐ diǎn?	What are [your] business hours?
Nǐ jǐ diǎn kāimén?	When do you open (open door)?
Jǐ diǎn guānmén?	When do you close (close door)?

#### 4.3.5 Time zones (shíqū)

It comes as a surprise for many people to find out that China operates on a single time zone, eight hours in advance of Greenwich Meantime (and conveniently, 12 hours in advance of the Eastern time zone of the US). Chinese lands far to the west are sparsely populated, so this system causes minimal disruption. For a period beginning in 1986, there was a daylight-savings shift (xiàshízhì 'summer-time-system'), but this was found impracticable and was abandoned a few years ago (as of 2003). The word shíchā literally 'time difference', also means 'jetlag'. (The noun form, chā, with level tone, is related to the verb form chà 'to lack', with falling tone.)

Shíchā hěn lihai.	The time lag / jet lag is bad!
Wo háishi hěn lèi – yīnwèi shíchā.	I'm still tired – because of the time lag.

**Exercise 2.**

Ask or explain:

1. What time do you bathe?
  2. I generally bathe in the morning at 6 or 7.
  3. I don't eat any breakfast, I just have some tea.
  4. But I usually eat lunch and dinner. Lunch at noon, dinner at 7.
  5. We start class at about 2 and end at 3.
  6. I have two classes today, one at 10 and one at 2.
  7. The lecture is at 9, the section at 10.
  8. From 2:00 to 4:00 this afternoon, we have a Chinese test.
  9. I've already bathed, but I haven't eaten yet.
  10. Do you always eat a breakfast? / Not necessarily.
  11. What time do you close, please?
  12. Have you ever been to Xichang? It's in Sichuan, about 400 kms from Chongqing.
- 

**4.4 DE revisited**

As noted in §2.4.2, the addition of *de* turns a noun into an attribute of another noun, serving a function similar to the apostrophe-s of written English, or to prepositions such as 'on' or 'of':

Zhāng xiānshēng de xíngli	Mr. Zhang's luggage
Mǎ shīfu de dìdì	Master Ma's younger brother
xuésheng de zuòyè	students' homework
jīntiān de bàozhì	today's newspaper
zhèi ge xīngqītiān de piào	tickets for this Sunday [upcoming]
sān suì de nǚhái	a 3 year old girl ('female-child')
yǐqián de lǎoshī	a former teacher
Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi hěn yǒuyìsi.	The news about the World Cup is quite interesting.
Yǒu shénme Àoyùnhuì de xiāoxi ma?	Any news on the Olympics?

*Notes*

- a) Shìjiè Bēi 'World Cup'; cf. Ōuzhōu Bēi 'Euro Cup'; Àoyùnhuì 'Olympics (Olympic-sports-meeting)'.
- b) Xiāoxi 'report; news'.

Defining or disambiguating words, or identifying the character associated with a particular syllable, often involves DE in its function of linking attributes to nouns:

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| i)   | Něi ge ‘shēng’?<br><i>Shēngri de shēng.</i>   | Which ‘sheng’?<br><i>The sheng of ‘shengri [birthday]’.</i>  |
| ii)  | Dōngnánxībēi de xī ma?<br><i>Bù, xiāoxi de xī</i>   | The xi of ‘dongnan-xibei’?<br><i>No, the xi of ‘xiaoxi’.</i>   |
| iii) | Wǒ xìng Lù (路)!<br><i>Dàlù de Lù (陆) ma?</i><br><i>Bù, mǎlù de Lù (路).</i><br><br><i>Mǎlù de lù shì bu shì</i><br><i>zǒulù de lù?</i><br><br><i>Duì, shì zǒulù de lù.</i> | My [sur]name’s Lu.<br><i>The Lu of ‘mainland’?</i><br><i>No, the Lu of ‘mainroad’.</i><br><br><i>Is the ‘lu’ of ‘malu’ [main road] the</i><br><i>‘lu’ of ‘zoulu’ [to walk]?</i><br><br><i>That’s right, the ‘lu’ of ‘zoulu’.</i> |
| iv)  | Zǒulù de lù zěnmē xiě?<br><i>Shì zhèi yàngxiě: 路;</i><br><i>yígòng 13 ge bǐhuà. Lù nèi</i><br><i>ge zì nǐ yǐjīng xué-guo ma?</i><br><br><i>Xué-guo, kěshì wàng le.</i>    | How do you write the lu of zoulu?<br><i>This way: 路; 13 strokes in all. Have you</i><br><i>already studied the character for road?</i><br><br><i>[We]’ve studied [it], but [we]’ve forgotten [it].</i>                           |

#### 4.4.1 Where the noun head is omitted

In many cases, the noun following de is implied, in which case it can be glossed as ‘the one/thing associated with’; in some cases, the form without the head noun is more natural.

- |                               |   |                        |   |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Zhè shì tā de xíngli.         | > | Zhè shì tā de.         | These are his.                          |
| Shì xuésheng de zuòyè ma?     | > | Shì xuésheng de ma?    | Are [these] the students’?              |
| Nà shì zuótiān de bào.        | > | Nà shì zuótiān de.     | That’s yesterday’s.                     |
|                               |   | Tā shì IBM de ma?      | Is she from IBM?                        |
|                               |   | Bù, tā shì Wēiruǎn de. | No, she’s from MS.                      |
| Xìng Máo de yě shì lǎoshī ma? |   |                        | Is the person named Mao also a teacher? |
| Wǒ bú tài qīngchu.            |   |                        | I’m not sure.                           |
| Xìng Zhào de shì lǎobǎn,      |   |                        | The person named Zhao’s the boss; the   |
| xìng Lǐ de shì tā qīzi.       |   |                        | one named Li is his wife.               |

#### 4.4.2 Where de does not appear

##### a) Country names

Expressions like Zhōngguó rén, Zhōngwén lǎoshī, or Běijīng dìtú ‘map of Beijing’ do not usually require an intervening de. The rule is that country names (and language names) may be directly attributed to following nouns.

## b) Pronouns with kin terms

While tā de lǎoshī requires de, tā dìdì often omits it. Why? The rule is that pronouns (only!) tend to attach directly to kin terms.

	Zhè shì wǒ de péngyou.	This is my friend.
but	Zhè shì wǒ dìdì.	This is my younger brother.
	Zhè shì wǒ de lǎoshī.	This is my teacher.
but	Zhè shì wǒ shūshu.	This is my uncle ['father's y. bro.']
	Zhè shì Chén lǎoshī de jiějie.	This is Prof. Chen's older sister.
but	Zhè shì tā jiějie.	This is her older sister.

## c) SVs without modifiers

SV phrases such as hěn hǎo, hěn hǎokàn, bù hǎochī, nàme guì, hěn hǎotīng are generally followed by de when they modify a noun:

bù hǎokàn de dìfang	an unattractive place
hěn hǎochī de Zhōngguó cài	delicious Chinese food
nàme yuǎn de dìfang	such a distant place
bù hǎotīng de yīnyuè	horrible sounding music

But bare (unmodified) SVs (especially single-syllable ones) may be so closely associated with a following noun that de does not intercede – or at least, is not required. Such combinations verge on becoming compound words. Compare the following:

lǎo péngyou	old friends
but	
hěn hǎo de péngyou	good friends
hǎo cài	good food
but	
bù hǎochī de cài	food that's not good
dà yú	big fish
but	
nàme dà de yú	such a big fish

A similar distinction is possible with some combinations of nouns. Those that combine as compound words do not require an intervening de: yúdǔ 'fish stomach'; mǎchē 'horse cart'. Those that are less word-like require de: xiàng de bízi 'an elephant's nose'; sùshè de dāmén 'the main door of the dormitory'.

*d) Duō (and shǎo) as attributes*

As noted in §3.8.1, duō (and shǎo) are exceptional as SV attributes in (i) requiring a modifying adverb, such as hěn, and (b) *not* requiring a connecting de:

Tā yǒu hěn duō Zhōngguó péngyou. He has lots of Chinese friends.

Zhèi ge dìfāng wèishénme yǒu nàme duō rén?	How come this place has so many people?
---	--

Nǐ yǒu zhème duō xíngli!	You have such a lot of luggage!
--------------------------	---------------------------------

*e) Several de's in the same phrase*

Finally, where several de's might appear in the same phrase, the first is often omitted:

wǒ <de> péngyou de lǎoshī	my friend's teacher
---------------------------	---------------------

But sometimes, having several de's in the same phrase is unavoidable. The presence of several de's in the following sentence is just as awkward and unavoidable as the several *of*'s in the English equivalent:

Wǒ mèimei de xiānshēng de lǎoshī shì wǒ shūshu de tàitai.	The teacher of the husband of my younger sister is my uncle's wife.
--	--

**Exercise 3.**

1. Explain that big ones aren't necessarily tasty, and small ones aren't all bad. [tomatoes]
2. Introduce your good friend, Liú Shíjiǔ.
3. Ask her if the keys belong to her.
4. Explain that your bags aren't here; they're still on the plane.
5. Explain that he's not your brother; that you don't have any brothers.
6. Explain that she's the boss's wife.
7. Explain that his older brother's wife is your Chinese teacher.
8. Announce that there's a report on the Olympics in yesterday's paper.
9. Ask how he (the addressee) feels about present day music [yīnyuè]?
10. Explain that you don't usually drink coffee in the morning.
11. Ask how to say 'tomato' in Chinese; then ask how it's written.

**4.5 Names in detail**

Some basic information about names and titles was presented in Unit 1 (§1.6.1 and 1.9.1) and Unit 2 (§2.6). This section adds further details.

**4.5.1 The form of names**

Chinese names are usually either two or three syllables long:

Wáng Mǎng  
Dù Fǔ

Lǐ Péng  
Cuī Jiàn

Liú Bāng  
Jiāng Qīng

Dèng Xiǎopíng  
Jiāng Zémín

Lǐ Dēnghuī  
Zhū Róngjī

Lǐ Guāngyào  
Máo Zédōng

Names of four or more syllables are usually foreign:

Zhōngcūn Yángzǐ (Japanese)  
Yuēhàn Shǐmìsī John Smith

Notice that two-syllable *xìng*, like two-syllable *míngzi* are, by convention, written without spaces. (English syllabification practices are not suitable for pinyin; so, for example, a name like, Geling, will by English syllabification rules ‘wrap around’ as Ge-ling rather than the correct Ge-ling.)

#### 4.5.2 *Xìng*

*Xìng* are rather limited in number. In fact, an expression for ‘the common people’ lǎobǎixìng ‘old hundred names’ suggests that there are only 100 *xìng*, though in fact, there are considerably more (and bǎi in that expression was not intended literally). Most [Chinese] *xìng* are single-syllable (Zhāng, Wáng, Lǐ), but a few are double-syllable (Sīmǎ, Ōuyáng, Sītú). Sīmǎ, you should know, was the *xìng* of China’s first major historian, Sīmǎ Qiān (145-86 BC), who wrote the Shǐ Jì, a history of China from earliest times to the Han dynasty, when he lived.

The character primer called the Bǎijiāxìng ‘Multitude of Family Names (100-family-names)’, that first appeared in the 10th century, gives over 400 single-syllable surnames and some 40 double. In modern times, rare surnames would enlarge those numbers, but relatively few surnames account for a large percentage of the population. It has been estimated that 20 surnames account for about 50% of the population; people named Lǐ alone may number as many as 100 million. Some *xìng* have meanings: Bái ‘white’, Wáng ‘king’. But others are (now) just names, eg Wú (of persons, as well as the name of several historical states). Some names are homophonous, differing only in character (eg the two Lù’s [路, 陆] cited in an earlier example); others differ only in tone, eg: Wáng (王) and Wāng (汪).

#### 4.5.3 *Other names*

In addition to their public names (*xìng*), Chinese traditionally had (and some still have) a number of other names, including the zì, a disyllabic name taken (mostly by males) for use outside the family, and hào, adult nickname (again, more for males). Still other names were given in infancy (rǔmíng or xiǎomíng), in childhood (míng), or, at the other extreme, after death (shìhào). In modern times, the *míng* and the *zì* combine to form the *míngzì* ‘given name’; *rǔmíng*s are still common, eg xiǎobǎo ‘little treasure’.



It is worth examining the first lines of traditional biographical entries to see how names are cited. Here are two examples, one about a modern leader, Dèng Xiǎopíng (from an exhibit in the Hong Kong Museum of History), the other, from an entry in the *Cí Hǎi* ('word sea'), one of the more comprehensive of modern Chinese-to-Chinese dictionaries. It is introducing Confucius, who lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Both entries are rendered in pinyin, with underscoring and highlighting to make the correspondences clearer:

- i) Dèng Xiǎopíng yuánmíng Dèng Xiānshèng, xuémíng Dèng Xīxián, 1904 nián 8 yuè, 22 rì chūshēng....

*Deng Xiaoping* former name *Deng Xiansheng*, school [formal] name *Deng Xixian*, 1904 [year] August 22 [day] born....

- ii) Kǒngzǐ (*gōngyuánqián* 551 – *gōngyuánqián* 479): Chūn Qiū **mòqī**, sīxiǎngjiā, zhèngzhìjiā, jiàoyùjiā, Rújiā de **chuàngshǐzhě**. Míng Qiū, zì Zhōngní. **Lǚguó** Zōuyì (**jīn** Shāndōng Qǔbù dōngnán) rén.

*Confucius (BC 551 – BC 479): **End of the Spring and Autumn period**; a philosopher, statesman, educator and **founder of the Confucian School**. His 'ming' was Qiū, his 'zi' was Zhōngní. He was **a man** from Zōuyì in **the state of Lǚ** (near modern southeast Qǔbù in Shāndōng).*

#### 4.5.4 Míngzì ('name-character')

Given names, míngzì, are more various than xìng and often selected for their meaning (along with well the appearance of their characters): Cài Qiáng 'Cai strong'; Cài Pǔ 'Cai great'; Cáo Hóng 'Cao red' [red being an auspicious color]; Lín Yíxī 'Lin happy-hope'; Zhāng Shūxiá 'Zhāng virtuous-chivalrous'; Luó Jiāqí 'Luo family-in+good+order'. In many cases it is possible to guess the sex of the person from the meanings of the name. (Of the 6 names mentioned in this paragraph, #3,4,5 are female, #1,2,6 are male, as it turns out.)

It is common practice to incorporate generational names in the *míngzì* by assigning a particular syllable (often chosen from a poem) to each generation. So for example, Máo Zédōng's younger brothers were Máo Zémín and Máo Zétán; his younger sister was Máo Zéhóng. All contain the syllable Zé (泽). Such practices allow people from the same district to work out – and remember – their kinship when they meet.

#### 4.5.5 Usage

At pre-arranged meetings, people will introduce themselves and immediately present a business card. But at other times, people may wait to be introduced. If you do ask a stranger a name (say, someone seated next to you on a train) you would – as noted in Unit 2 -- use the polite form, guìxìng, often with the deferential pronoun nín. And generally, the response would supply xìng and míngzì:

[Nín] guìxìng?

Wǒ xìng Liú, jiào Liú Shíjiǔ.

In Taiwan, and sometimes on the Mainland, people may answer with humble forms:

(Taiwan) Guixìng? / Bìxìng Wèi. (Lit. ‘shabby surname...’)  
 (Mainland) Guixìng? / Miǎn guì, xìng Wèi. (Lit. ‘dispense with guì...’)

## 4.6 Years

### 4.6.1 Dates

As noted in §1.3.4, years in dates are usually expressed as strings of single digits (rather than large numbers) placed before nián ‘year’. The only exception is the millennium year, 2000, which is sometimes expressed as ‘two thousand’ (making it, at a stretch, potentially ambiguous with 2000 years [in duration]).

2002	èrlínglíng’èr nián
1998	yījiǔjiǔbā nián
1840	yībāsilíng nián
2000	èrlínglínglíng nián or liǎngqiān nián

The question word used to elicit a year as a date is něi nián ‘which year’. [Recall něi is the combining form of nǎ ‘which’, just as nèi is the combining form of nà.] But asking about dates in the past introduces some grammatical features that will have to wait until a later unit.

In the Republic of China – Taiwan, years are numbered formally from the establishment of the Republic, with 1912 as year #1. Here are the dates on two newspapers, one from the Mainland, and one from Taiwan:

<u>Zhōngguó Dàlù [PRC]</u>	<u>Táiwān [ROC]</u>
èr líng líng èr nián	jiǔshíyī nián
shíyuè	shíyuè
èrshíyī rì	èrshíyī rì
xīngqīyī	xīngqīyī

Observe the year: Mainland 2002 - Taiwan 91. If you subtract the Taiwan year, 91, from 2002, you get 1911, the date of the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of a republic (gònghéguó). In Chinese, the official name of Taiwan is still Zhōnghuá Mínguó ‘The Republic of China [ROC]’; the Mainland is called Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó ‘The People’s Republic of China [PRC]’. So to translate the ROC date into the PRC, or western calendar date, you add 1911 years. In speech, the ROC year is only used on formal occasions in Taiwan, but it is still usual in official writing.

### 4.6.2 Historical notes on dating

In Unit 1, you were introduced to a set of 10 terms of fixed order, the tiāngān or ‘heavenly stems’, which the Chinese use to designate members of a sequence.

Traditionally, these tiāngān were used in combination with another set of 12, known as the dìzhī ‘the earthly branches’. The two sets formed a cycle of 60 gānzhī.

tiāngān      甲 乙 丙 丁 戊 己 庚 辛 壬 癸      (10)  
jiǎ yǐ bǐng dīng wù jǐ gēng xīn rén guǐ

dìzhī      子 丑 寅 卯 辰 巳 午 未 申 酉 戌 亥      (12)  
zǐ chǒu yín mǎo chén sì wǔ wèi shēn yǒu xū hài

A sequence of 60 is achieved by combining the two sets in pairs, 甲子 jiǎzǐ, 乙丑 yǐchǒu, 丙寅 bǐngyín, and so on until the tenth, 癸酉 guǐyǒu, at which point the tiāngān begin again while the dìzhī continue: 甲戌 jiǎxū, 乙亥 yǐhài, 丙子 bǐngzǐ. After six repetitions of the tiāngān and five of the dìzhī, ending on 癸亥 guǐhài, all 60 possible combinations of the two sets will have been used, and the cycle begins again.

The gānzhī sets are attested as early as the Shang dynasty (1523-1028 BCE) on oracle bone inscriptions, when they were apparently used to count days (Wilkenson: 176). But the sets, individually as 10 or 12, or in combination as a set of 60, also came to designate other temporal units, such as years and hours. The 60 gānzhī were used to specify the dates of specific historical events. This was done by specifying the ruling emperor, either by name, or more usually, by reign name (niánhào), and then by counting from the first year of his reign using the gānzhī pairs.

Reign names of which several were often used over a single reign, were chosen for their auspicious meanings. The better known emperors are often known only by their reign names. Thus, Kāngxī, meaning ‘vitality and brilliance’ is the reign name of the great Qing emperor who ruled from 1661-1722. The well-known dictionary compiled during his reign is referred to, in English, as the *Kangxi Dictionary*. It contains almost 50,000 entries, and is still sold in Chinese bookshops. Kangxi’s grandson, the Qiánlóng emperor (also known by his reign name) is also well-known in the West. His long and eventful rule from 1736 - 96 just exceeded a 60 year gānzhī cycle. Some historical events are still commonly referred to by their gānzhī names, eg the Xīnhài Gémìng ‘the 1911 Revolution’ (xīnhài being year 48 of the 60 cycle).

The 12 dìzhī were also used to designate time of day, each one being assigned a two-hour period, beginning with 11pm to 1 am. These ‘hours’ (or shí) also correlated with the shēngxiào, the 12 animals of the zodiac (§4.6.4), so that the first dìzhī, 子 zǐ, linked to the first animal shǔ ‘rat’, designated the two hours from 11 pm to 1 am, the second, 丑 chǒu, linked with niú ‘ox’, designated the ‘hour’ 1 am to 3 am, and so on. The five ‘hours’ that fall in the night (at least in the most populated regions) were also called the wǔgēng, or ‘five changes’ or ‘shifts’ (yìgēng to wǔgēng). In cities, daytime ‘hours’ were announced by rhythmical beats from the official drum (gǔ), often lodged in drum towers (gǔlóu) of the sort that survive in cities such as Xi’an and Beijing. The drumming would then be repeated in more distant neighborhoods.

In addition to the dìzhī ‘hours’, from very early times time was also kept by means of water clocks or ‘clepsydra’ (a word derived from Greek roots for ‘steal’ and ‘water’). Water clocks measured time by the flow of water through a small aperture. Chinese water clocks traditionally divided the day into 100 equal divisions, called kè. The root meaning of kè is ‘to inscribe’, suggesting markings on a gauge; the usage survives in the modern terms for ‘quarter past’ and ‘quarter to’ the hour, yíkè and sānkè. One kè represented 14.4 minutes, or approximately 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a ‘double hour’ (or 1/100 of a day).

In 1912, the new Republic of China officially adopted the Gregorian calendar, and 1912 was named year one of the new era (so 2004 is year 93). In the modern era, Chinese have sometimes dated from the birthdate of Huángdì ‘the Yellow Emperor’ (one of the five mythical founding emperors). At the beginning of the Republic, this date was fixed as 4609 years before year one of the Republic, ie 2698 BCE.

#### 4.6.3 Age

While in English, age and duration are both given in years (‘3 years old’, ‘for 3 years’), in Chinese there is a distinction. Years of duration are counted with nián (originally ‘a harvest’ or ‘harvest year’): sān nián ‘3 years’; sānshí nián ‘30 years’. But years of age are counted with sui (originally used for the planet ‘Jupiter’, with its revolutionary period of 12 years, then for the yearly cycle of seasons). Thus: shíbā suì ‘18 years old’, èrshíyī suì ‘21 years old’, jiǔ suì ‘9 years old’.

Asking about the age of adults, one can safely use the following expression:

Tā duō dà le?	(S/he how big by+now?)
Tā èrshíbā <sui> le.	S/he’s 28.

The addition of the noun niánjì ‘age’ makes the expressions a little more formal, and therefore more appropriate for a direct inquiry:

Nǐ duō dà niánjì?	(You how big age?)
Tā niánjì duō dà le?	(S/he age how big by+now?)

As the examples show, age can be expressed without a verb, much like dates in, where shì can be omitted in cases where there is no adverbial modification. Shì may also appear when rejecting an age:

Tā bú shì sìshí suì, tā shì shísì suì.	She’s not 40, she’s 14.
--	-------------------------

But otherwise, when a verb has to be supplied for an adverbial modifier, it is usually yǒu (rather than shì):

Tā duō dà?	How old is he?
Tā zhǐ yǒu bā suì.	He’s only 8.

With children, it is possible to ask about age directly using the basic expression: Nǐ jǐ suì? ‘How many years old are you?’ There are also deferential ways of asking about the age of older people. Sometimes, using the respectful form of address for old people, lǎorénjiā, will convey sufficient deference:

<Lǎorénjiā> jīnnián duō dà niánjì?	<Kind sir> may I ask how old [you] are this year?
---------------------------------------	--

Other expressions are also available that convey the tone of English ‘May I ask your age, sir?’

<Lǎorénjiā> guì gèng?	(<venerable+sir> worthy-age?)
<Lǎorénjiā> gāoshòu?	(<venerable+sir> long-life?)

One additional point: age is frequently given as an approximation, in which case lái (cognate with lái ‘come’) can be inserted between the number (typically a multiple of ten) and the M, sui:

Tā duō dà?	How old is he?
Tā <yǒu> wǔshí lái suì	She’s about 50 [50 ~ 55]; she’s 50 something.

#### Notes

- Notice that duō in duō dà functions as a question word meaning ‘to what degree’.
- Le often appears with expressions of age in the sense of ‘so far; by now’; however, the restrictive adverb zhǐ, is not compatible with final le.
- Suì can be omitted where the number is above a single digit: èrshíbā <sui>.

#### 4.6.4 The animal signs

At times, it may be inappropriate to ask someone directly about his/her age, but it is nevertheless important to know roughly how old a person is so as to be able to use proper levels of deference. So Chinese often ask what one’s zodiac sign is instead, and infer age from that. Birth signs, called shēngxiào (‘born-resemble’) or shǔxiàng (‘belong-appearance’) are the 12 animals associated with the Chinese zodiac, beginning with the rat and ending with the pig. For reference, two recent cycles of years are noted here:

shǔ > niú > hǔ > tù > lóng > shé > mǎ > yáng > hóu > jī > gǒu > zhū.  
rat > ox > tiger > hare > dragon > snake > horse > goat > monkey > chicken > dog > pig

1984 > 85 > 86 > 87 > 88 > 89 > 90 > 91 > 92 > 93 > 94 > 95
1972 > 73 > 74 > 75 > 76 > 77 > 78 > 79 > 80 > 81 > 82 > 83

Comments about birth signs generally make use of the verb shǔ ‘belong to’: Wǒ shǔ mǎ, tā shǔ tù! ‘I’m the horse [year], she’s the hare.’ So to discover a person’s age, you can ask:

Qǐngwèn, nǐ <shi> shǔ shénme de? What’s your animal sign, please?  
 Wǒ <shi> shǔ lóng de. I’m the year of the dragon.

#### Notes

- a) The pattern here with *shi* and *de* translates literally ‘you be belong [to] what one’, which suggests a permanent status rather than a fleeting one; however, people do ask the question in its leaner form as well: Nǐ shǔ shénme?  
 b) In 2005, a person born in the year of the dragon is either 17, 29, 41, etc. In most cases, the correct choice will be obvious.

Though traditionally, they have played a relatively small role in the casting of horoscopes and predicting the future, in recent years, particularly in more cosmopolitan places such as Hong Kong, the zodiac signs have come to play a more important role in the matching of couples for marriage, as well as in other social activities.

#### 4.6.5 Year in school or college

‘Year’ or ‘grade’ in school or college is niánjí (unfortunately close to niánjì ‘age’, introduced in the previous section). Niánjí is a compound consisting of nián ‘year’ and jí ‘level’. Different levels are expressed as yīniánjí ‘first year (freshman)’; èrniánjí ‘second year (sophomore)’, etc. The question, ‘which level’, is formed with the low toned jǐ ‘how many; how much’; hence, jǐniánjí ‘what year’:

- Q. Qǐngwèn, nǐ shì jǐniánjí de < xuésheng >? Excuse me [may I ask], what grade you’re in?
- A. Wǒ shì sìniánjí de < xuésheng >. I’m a fourth year student.  
 Wǒ shì Qīng Huá sānniánjí de xuésheng. I’m a 3rd year student at Tsinghua.
- Wǒ bú shì xuésheng. I’m not a student.  
 Wǒ shì yánjiūshēng. I’m a graduate (or Brit. ‘post-graduate’) student. (research-student)

## 4.7 Studying and working

### 4.7.1 Vocabulary

<i>N</i>	<i>N or V</i>	<i>V+O</i>	<i>V+O</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>
zhuānyè	zhǔxiū	dúshū	niànshū	xuéxí	xué
a major [PRC];	a major;	study; attend	read; study	to study;	study;
a specialty;	to major in	school	[Tw]	to learn;	learn;
a discipline	[Tw]			emulate	imitate
				[PRC]	

<i>V+O</i>	<i>V+O</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V+O</i>	<i>V+O</i>
shàngxué	kāixué	gōngzuò	gànhuór	bìyè
attend-school	begin-school	a job;	do-livelihood	conclude-undertaking
attend school;	start school	to work;	to be doing s/t;	to graduate
go to school		have a job	to work [PRC]	

In later units, you will discover that the difference between a two-syllable verb such as xuéxí or gōngzuò and a verb + object (V+O) such as gànhuór or bìyè is that the latter combination is much less stable. With V+O constructions, the O can be detached from the verb: Gàn shénme huó ne? ‘What’s [he] doing?’

#### 4.7.2 Major; specialization

A major subject of study, or a specialization, is zhuānyè ‘special-study’ or, particularly in Taiwan, zhǔxiū ‘main-study’; the latter is also a verb, ‘to specialize; to major’.

Nǐ de zhuānyè / zhǔxiū shì shénme?  
 Shì wùlǐ(xué).  
 Shì yīnyuè(xué).

What’s your specialty/major?  
 Physics.  
 Music

#### 4.7.3 To study

There are a number of verbs used for studying and learning, with differences in usage between the Mainland and Taiwan.

a) One set includes the verbs xué and xuéxí ‘study; learn’, the latter rarely used in Taiwan. Xuéxí is often used for the *activity* of studying (often expressed as niànshū in Taiwan).

Dàjiā dōu zài nǎr?

Where is everyone?

Dōu zài túshūguǎn xuéxí ~ niànshū;  
 míngtiān yǒu kǎoshì.

They’re in the library studying;  
 there’s a test tomorrow.

But in many contexts, both the single and [except in Taiwan] the disyllabic form are both possible:

Xuésheng dōu yīnggāi xué<xí>  
 wàiyǔ, bú duì ma?

Students should all study foreign  
 languages, no?

Ng, dōu yīnggāi xué!

Yes, they should!

However, xué is preferred in the following examples (both of which translate ‘learn’ rather than ‘study’):

Zhōngwén hěn nán xué ba. <i>Yǒu diǎnr nán, kěshì fēicháng yǒu yìsi.</i>	Chinese must be tough to learn. <i>It is a bit, but it's fascinating!</i>
Tā hěn cōngmíng, xué+de hěn kuài.	She's quite bright -- [she] learns fast.

b) Xuéxí also means 'emulate', with the model, usually introduced by xiàng 'towards':

Xiàng Léi Fēng xuéxí!	'Learn from Lei Feng (Emulate Lei Feng)'. [Lei Feng is a well-known labor hero from the 1960s.]
-----------------------	---

c) When the question 'what are you studying' is not about what you *happen* to be studying at that moment, but rather what field of study you are committed to, then the question (and answer) is usually cast as a nominalization, ie 'you be one [de] who studies what'. (cf. Nǐ <shì> shǔ shénme de? in §4.6.3.)

Q	Nǐ shì xué shénme de?	What are you studying?
A	Wǒ shì xué wùlǐxué de.	I'm studying physics.

#### 4.7.4 Zài + verb 'action in progress'

Talking about being in school versus working often leads to comments that express ongoing action, such as: 'she's still in school' or 'he's working now'. So here we take a brief detour to consider how to express action in progress in Chinese.

It turns out that zài 'be at' not only occurs with noun objects to form location phrases (zài bàngōngshì 'in the office'; zài wàitōu 'outside') and post-verbal phrases (tā shēng zài Sūzhōu), but it occurs in the adverb position, before a verb, to emphasize 'action in progress' – often in conjunction with a final ne, which suggests a level of immediacy and engagement.

Tā chī zǎofàn le ma? <i>Hái méi ne, tā hái zài xǐzǎo ne.</i>	Has she eaten? <i>No, not yet; she's still showering.</i>
Zhāng Héng zài nǎ? <i>Tā zài kànbào ne.</i>	Where's Zhang Heng? <i>He's reading the paper.</i>
Duìbuqǐ, wǒ hái zài chīfàn ne. <i>Nǐ &lt;zài&gt; chī shénme ne?</i>	Sorry, I'm still eating. <i>What are you eating?</i>
Zhōu Shuāng qīlai le ma? <i>Hái méi ne, tā hái zài shuìjiào ne.</i>	Is Zhou Shuang up? <i>No, not yet, he's still sleeping.</i>

Ongoing action need not always be explicitly marked with zài; sometimes the final ne suffices to suggest that the action is in progress:



Nǐ chī shénme ne?  
Chī kǒuxiāngtáng ne.

What are you eating?  
Chewing gum ('mouth-fragrant-candy')

Nǐ kàn shénme ne?  
Kàn Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi ne!

What are you reading?  
An article on the World Cup.

#### 4.7.5 Studying; being in school

Studying in the sense of being in school (or college) is expressed by one of a set of words that includes the synonymous verb+object compounds, dúshū and niànshū, literally 'be studying (study books)'. The two overlap with shàngxué, also a verb+object, which has the sense of 'being in school; studying' as well as 'starting school' – at the beginning of the day. In the following interchange, all three V+Os are acceptable:

Jiǎ Nǐ mèimei duō dà le?

How old is your sister?

Yǐ Èrshíqī

27.

Jiǎ Tā hái zài dúshū ma?

Is she still in school?

Yǐ Duì, tā hái zài dúshū, shì dàxué de xuésheng, zài Qīnghuá Dàxué xué yīxué de.

Yes, she is, she's a university student, studying medicine at Tsinghua University.

However, in the following interchange, where the sense is 'go to school; begin school for the day', shàngxué is more likely:

Měitiān jǐ diǎn <qù> shàngxué?

What time does [he] go to school?

Tā měitiān qī diǎn bàn qù shàngxué. He goes to school every day at 7:30.

'To begin the term at a school (or university)' is kāixué (the kāi of kāihuì 'hold/attend a meeting' or kāichē 'drive [a vehicle]'):

Wǒmen jiǔyuè èr hào kāixué.  
Zhōngguó xuésheng yě shì jiǔ yuèfēn kāixué.

We start classes on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Chinese students start in September, too.

O, Zhōngguó dàxué yě shì jiǔyuèfēn kāixué ma?  
Shì de.

Oh, Chinese universities also begin in September?  
That's right!

#### 4.7.6 Work

Students graduate and get jobs. In which case, the interchange in the previous section might read:

Jiǎ Nǐ mèimei duō dà le?

How old is your sister?

Yǐ Èrshíqī

27.

Jiǎ	Tā hái zài dúshū ma?	Is she still in school?
Yǐ	Tā bìyè le, tā gōngzuò le.	She's graduated, she's working.
Jiǎ	Shénme gōngzuò?	What sort of job?
Yǐ	Tā shì gāo diànnǎo de.	She does computing.

Note:

gāo a verb with a broad range of meaning: 'do; make; manage; deal with; set up; pick up; etc.

Other examples

Jiǎ	Tā zài shénme dìfāng gōngzuò?	Where does he work?
Yǐ	Tā zài bǎoxiǎn gōngsī gōngzuò.	He works in an insurance company
Jiǎ	Nǐ zhǎo shéi?	Who are you looking for?
Yǐ	Zhǎo xiǎo Féng – Féng Xiǎoquán.	Young Feng – Feng Xiaoquan.
Jiǎ	Tā zài gànhuó ne, zài cāngkù.	He's working, in the warehouse.
Yǐ	Zhème wǎn, hái zài gànhuó ne?	So late [and] he's still at work?
Jiǎ	Ng, tā shìr ~ shìqing tài duō le!	Yup, he's got too much [to do].

#### 4.7.7 College and department

Establishing a person's department (xì) or school or university (dàxué) makes use of the question word něi (nǎ) and the general M gè: něi ge xì; něi ge dàxué. There are two ways to ask about university and department. One uses zài:

Nǐ shì zài něi ge dàxué?	Which university are you at?
Nǐ shì zài něi ge xì?	Which department are you in?

The other does not use zài, but rather, the nominalizing pattern but with shì and final de, along the lines of the earlier statements of a major: wǒ shì xué wùlǐ de 'I study physics.'

Nǐ shì něi ge dàxué de?	Which is your university?
Nǐ shì něi ge xì de?	Which is your department?

So, for example:

Jiǎ. Qǐngwèn, nǐ shì něi ge dàxué de?	Which university are you at?
Yǐ. Wǒ shì Běijīng Dàxué de.	I'm at Peking University [sic].

Jiǎ. O, Běi Dà; nà nǐ shì xué  
shénme de?

Oh, Bei Da; so what are you  
studying?

Yǐ. Wǒ shì xué guǎnlǐ xué de.

I'm studying management.

Jiǎ. Zài nǐ ge xì?

In which department?

Yǐ. Zài Jīngjì xì.

Economics.

#### Exercise 4.

Explain: that you are [years old];  
that you're at [university / school];  
that you're an [grad / undergrad];  
that you're a [grade-level] student there;  
that your major is [...];  
that you're in the department of [...];  
that you are taking [number] of subjects this semester; [list]  
that you have [number] of classes today;  
that you have classes today at [time] and [time];  
that you have classes everyday except Wednesday.  
that you were born and grew up in Chengdu, but now you live in Nanjing.

## 4.8 Forms of address

In general, Chinese place more importance on address forms of all kinds than Americans, a fact that reflects the importance of status in Chinese society. We can make a distinction, on the one hand, between forms of address that take the place of names of either strangers (like English 'sir', 'buddy', 'mac') or intimates (like 'sis', 'dad' and 'auntie') and, on the other hand, titles, that can occur with surnames (eg 'Mr.', 'Mrs.' and 'Professor').

### 4.8.1 Forms of address used instead of names

The safest course for foreigners may be to avoid forms of address when speaking to strangers, particularly to women, and to simply begin with qǐngwèn 'may I ask [you]', or with the more courtly expression, lǎojià 'excuse me; may I bother you' [more used in northern regions and by older speakers]. Otherwise, lǎoshī can be used to address male or female clerks and civil servants (as well as teachers, of course); xiānshēng 'sir' may be used to address adult males of the salaried classes; and shīfu 'master' (or lǎo shīfu for older people) can be used to address blue collar workers. Shop-keepers, male or female, can be addressed as lǎobǎn, which is similar in tone to English 'boss' [of a shop or small business]. Tóngzhì 'comrade' [modeled on Russian usage], in use into the 80s, was never an appropriate term of address for foreigners to use to Chinese. [Nowadays, it is said to be current among male urban homosexuals.]

Xiānshēng, jièguāng, jièguāng

Sirs, can I get through? ('borrow light')

Lǎojià ~ qǐngwèn, xǐshǒujiān  
shì bu shì zài zhèi lóu?

Excuse me, is the restroom on this floor?

Shīfu, qǐngwèn, Pān yuànzǎng de      Excuse me sir, [could you tell me]  
bàngōngshì zài nǎ?                              where Dean Pan's office is?

Lǎobǎn, yǒu méiyǒu bǐjìběn?              Sir, do you have any notebooks?

In Chinese, as in English (Miss? M'am?), there is probably no really appropriate way to address a female stranger, at least not on the Mainland. Xiǎojie 'Miss', that had some currency there in the past, and may still survive as a term of address in overseas communities, is now rare, possibly because the term has been contaminated by association with expressions such as sānpéi xiǎojie, '3 [ways]-keep+company girls'.

Chinese, like many cultures often uses kin terms for address where no actual relationship exists, in the same way that English-speaking children often use the terms 'uncle' and 'auntie' for adults of their parents' generation. In China, usage varies greatly with region and age of speaker, but some typical examples are listed below – more for reference at this point than for usage. Unless otherwise stated, these terms are not used as titles (ie not with a xìng).

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| shūshu            | 'uncle (father's younger brother)', eg a child to a male of his parents' age.  |
| dàshū             | as with <u>shūshu</u> , but by older speakers rather than children.  |
| āyí               | 'auntie; nanny', eg a child to a woman of his parents' age.  |
| bófù              | 'uncle (father's elder brother)', eg a young adult addressing the father of a good friend.   |
| bómǔ              | 'aunt (wife of father's elder brother)', eg a young adult addressing the mother of a good friend.  |
| dàye              | 'uncle' ( <u>yéye</u> = 'paternal grandfather'); 'sir', to an elderly man.   |
| lǎorénjia         | 'Sir [to old men]'; a respectful term of address to elderly men.   |
| dà mā             | 'madam (father's elder brother's wife); to elderly women. <u>Dà mā</u> is more used in the north; <u>dàniáng</u> is more common in the south.                          |
| dàshěnr           | 'aunty'; used more in the countryside, as an affectionate term for women near the age of one's mother. Also after a <u>xìng</u> as: <u>Wáng shěnr</u> 'Aunt(ie) Wang'. |
| xiǎo dì; xiǎo mèi | 'little brother; little sister': used by some to address young waiters or other attendants, acquaintances; can be patronizing.   |
| xiǎo péngyou      | 'little friend' > adult to child.  |
| gēmen             | 'brother-plural'; form of address used by young men amongst themselves (cf. English 'man; buddy; dude; brother').  |

### 4.8.2 The changing scene

As noted above, there has been considerable shift in the use of titles and address forms in the Mainland since the days of Mao Zedong. When the Communist Party was taken more seriously there, tóngzhì ‘comrade’ was the common form of address, and with the prestige of the proletariat, shīfu ‘master in trade’ spread from blue collar factory workers to workers in other professions as a form of address. Now lǎoshī seems to be taking over from shīfu, spreading from being a form of address for teachers to civil servants and people in other professions.

### 4.8.3 General titles

Most of the non-professional titles have been mentioned in earlier units, so we will only summarize them here:

	<i>as title</i>	<i>general meanings</i>	<i>example</i>	<i>notes</i>
xiānsheng	Mr.	[other’s] husband; or professor [m,f]	Wáng xiānsheng	<i>general Mainland</i>
lǎoshī	Mr. or Ms.	teacher	Wáng lǎoshī	<i>general</i>
shīfu	‘Master’		Gāo shīfu	<i>Mainland</i>
tàitai	Mrs.	[other’s] wife	Wáng tàitai	<i>Taiwan</i>
fūren	Mrs.; Lady	[other’s] wife	Wáng fūren	<i>general</i>
nǚshì	Ms.		Téng nǚshì	<i>mostly written</i>
xiǎojie	Miss	young woman	Téng xiǎojie	<i>more Taiwan</i>

#### Notes

- Titles such as xiānsheng can also follow full names: Wáng xiānshēng; Wáng Nǎi xiānshēng. For a time, xiānshēng was also used as a deferential title for older and eminent professors – male or female; this usage now seems rarer.
- Tàitai ‘Mrs. (great; grand)’ and fūren ‘Lady’ are both used with husband’s xìng. Téng xiǎojie married to, say, Zhū xiānsheng could be addressed as Zhū tàitai, or Zhū fūren, if appropriate.
- Nǚshì, a formal term for ‘Miss’, or ‘Ms’ – again always with the woman’s own xìng – might be starting to fill the gap left by the decline of xiǎojie, but at present, the preferred form of address for women without professional titles seems to be full name or mingzi (when appropriate). In certain regions, jiě ‘older sister’ is appended to the xìng to form a name used between good friends: Hóngjiě ‘sister Hong’.
- Fūren is a common form of address for wives of high officials, Zhū Róngjī fūren. Mrs. Thatcher, former Prime Minister of Great Britain is called Dài Zhuō’ěr fūren or Sàqiè’ěr fūren, as well as Tiě Niángzǐ ‘the Iron Lady’.
- Lǎoshī can be used for self, eg to students: Wǒ shì Liú lǎoshī. Though the expression lǎoshī, hǎo does occur as a passing greeting or acknowledgement, a

more considered greeting is more appropriate – one that includes the *xìng*: Wèi lǎoshī, hǎo, etc.

#### 4.8.4 Other terms

There are a number of other terms that fit in the category of ‘address forms’ but which beginning students, and foreigners in general, are less likely to use. Here are two examples, using the surname Chén. Later, if you get a chance to work in a Chinese enterprise, you can observe the variety of titles and forms of address in more detail.

Chén lǎo      used to address older people (male or female) of some eminence.  
Chén gōng      to engineers or others who have, or had, positions in industry; gōng  
is short for gōngchéngshī ‘engineer’.

#### 4.8.5 Professional titles

Professional titles are job titles, the sort that would be inscribed on a business card. They are used on first meeting, during the introductions, but later such titles are likely to be replaced by something less formal such as lǎoshī, xiānsheng or even full name (xìng+míngzì). Here is a selection of professional titles:

jiàoshòu      ‘professor (teaching-instruct)’  
Zhōu jiàoshòu; Zhào Yuánrèn jiàoshòu. Nowadays on the Mainland, teachers of all ranks are usually addressed, and often address each other, as lǎoshī. Jiàoshòu is more likely to be used in formal settings, eg introductions, where it is important to indicate rank explicitly.

jīnglǐ      ‘manager [of a company etc.]’; Qián jīnglǐ

zhǔrèn      ‘director; head; chairperson (main-official+post)’ [of a company, academic department, etc.]; Liào zhǔrèn

dǒngshì      ‘director; trustee’; Huáng dǒngshì

zǒngcái      ‘director-general; CEO (overall-rule)’; Cáo zǒngcái

dáoyǎn      ‘director [of films or plays]’ Zhāng [Yìmóu] dáoyǎn

(...)-zhǎng      ‘head of; chief of (...)’

eg	xiàozhǎng	principle of a school	(xiào ‘school’)
	yuànzǎng	dean; director of hospital etc.	(yuàn ‘public facility’)
	shìzhǎng	mayor	(shì ‘city’)
	shěngzhǎng	governor	(shěng ‘province’)
	kēzhǎng	department head (hospital)	(kē ‘section’)
	chùzhǎng	section chief (government)	(chù ‘office’)
	huìzhǎng	president of an association	(huì ‘association’)
	chǎngzhǎng	head of a factory	(chǎng ‘factory’)

zǒngtǒng	‘president’	Lǐ zǒngtǒng; Kèlíndùn zǒngtǒng; Bùshí zǒngtǒng
zhǔxí	‘chairman (main-seat)’	Máo zhǔxí

The titles on this list can be prefixed with fù- ‘vice; deputy; associate’. But while fù- might appear on a business card as part of the description of a person’s rank, office or function, it is not usually used in direct address. Thus a Mr. Lee who is a fùzhǔrèn ‘associate director’ would be introduced and addressed simply as Lǐ zhǔrèn. A variety of possible fù-titles are listed below:

fùjiàoshòu	associate professor	fùxiàozhǎng	vice principal
fùzhǔrèn	associate director	fùshìzhǎng	vice mayor
fùjīnglǐ	deputy manager	fùzǒngtǒng	vice president

#### 4.8.6 From title to prefix

As friendships among Chinese develop, there comes a point when address shifts from the relatively formal xìng + title to other forms, including full name, míngzì or hào ‘nickname’. One of the possibilities, common amongst males, makes use of the prefix lǎo ‘old; venerable; etc.’ So instead of Wáng xiānsheng, friends might address Wáng as lǎo Wáng (nicely translated in Yuan and Church’s *The Oxford Starter Chinese Dictionary*, as ‘my pal [Wáng etc.]’). The factors that condition this shift involve age, relative status and other aspects of the relationship. Because it involves a degree of camaraderie that is not easily extended to non-locals, foreigners should probably wait for an explicit invitation before making such a shift.

In Cantonese speaking areas, the equivalent of lǎo is a (without tone), and so in southern regions (as well as in many communities of Southeast Asian Chinese), this prefix is borrowed into Mandarin, eg Abāo = lǎo Bāo, Améi = lǎo Méi.

Another prefix, xiǎo, is also used before xìng, as a term of endearment for young adults, particularly women (xiǎo Bì ‘young Bì’) or by contrast with another of the same surname who is older or has other features (size, maturity) that sets her or him apart.

Finally, it should be noted that intimates will (more in the northeast than south?) sometimes use xiǎo in front of the last syllable of a *given name*: thus Chén Bó might be addressed as Xiǎobó (rather than lǎo Chén or xiǎo Chén, or simply, Chén Bó).

full name	sex	informal	intimate	with title (formal)
Bái Sùzhēn	fem.	xiǎo Bái	Xiǎozhēn	Bái lǎoshī
Zhāng Dàmíng	male	lǎo Zhāng	Xiǎomíng	Zhāng jīnglǐ
Liáng Àimín	fem.	xiǎo Liáng	Xiǎomín	Liáng zhǔrèn

**Exercise 5.**

Greet the following people appropriately.

- Eg A teacher named Zhào >> Zhào lǎoshī, nín hǎo.  
1 A middle-aged, married woman whose husband's surname is Bái:  
2 A young woman surnamed Guō Měifāng:  
3 The wife of an important official named Zhū:  
4 A CEO named Dèng:  
5 The eminent Professor Xú:  
6 The deputy manager of a company, named Qián:  
7 The principal of a school, named Yuán:  
8 An elderly man seated on a park bench; an elderly women:  
9 Your bus driver, named Zhào:  
10 Your teacher's husband, whose surname is Huáng:

## 4.9 Introductions

Making introductions usually involves names and titles (Zhào Fāngfāng, Chén lǎoshī), pointing words (zhè, nà), set expressions of greeting (nǐ hǎo) and often, some explanation of the connection, provided in a phrase such as zhè shì wǒ de lǎoshī ‘this is my teacher’. A host may express his intention to introduce someone, using the disyllabic verb, jièshào ‘introduce’, as follows:

Zhāng lǎoshī, wǒ gěi nǐ  
jièshào jièshào! Zhè shì....

Prof. Zhang, let me introduce you.  
This is....

Notice how gěi shifts in meaning from its core sense of ‘give’ to ‘for [your benefit]’ when it is subordinated to the main verb, jièshào. Instead of zhè shì, the polite measure word for people, wèi will often be used: zhèi wèi shì....

#### 4.9.1 Relational information

To keep things manageable, you can provide relational information about people in the format:

Zhè <wèi> shì wǒ <de> ....

This is my....

a) *With de*

Zhè <wèi> shì wǒ de lǎoshī.

This is my teacher.

wǒ de Zhōngwén lǎoshī.

Chinese teacher.

wǒ de xuésheng

student.

wǒ de tóngxué.

classmate.

wǒ de péngyou.

friend.

wǒ de lǎo péngyou.

good friend.

wǒ de lǎobǎn.

boss [slightly jocular].

Zhāng lǎoshī de xuésheng

Prof. Zhang's student.



b) Usually without de

Zhè shi	wǒ fùqin.	father.
	wǒ bà<ba>	Dad (intimate).
	wǒ mǔqin	mother.
	wǒ mā<ma>	Mum (intimate).
	wǒ gēge.	older brother.
	wǒ dìdi.	younger brother.
	wǒ jiějie.	older sister.
	wǒ mèimei.	younger sister.
	wǒ àirén [not in Tw]	spouse (husband, wife).
	wǒ zhàngfu	husband (neutral).
	wǒ lǎogōng	husband (neutral).
	wǒ xiānshēng	husband (formal).
	wǒ qīzi	wife (neutral).
	wǒ lǎopo ~ lǎopó	wife (informal).
	wǒ xifu	wife (regional).
	wǒ tàitai [more in Tw]	wife (formal).

**4.9.2 A note on words for husband and wife**

In Chinese, as in English, words for ‘spouse’ go in and out of fashion. The use of lǎogōng for ‘husband’, for example, was probably influenced by films and TV programs from Hong Kong and Taiwan, so that the term is current among younger urban people in the Mainland. The female version of lǎogōng, lǎopó, is also quite common, though for some, it has a slightly jocular (and some would add, disrespectful) tone, along the lines of English ‘my old lady’. (The male equivalent would be lǎotóuzi ‘my old man’.) Terms such as qīzi ‘wife’ and zhàngfu ‘husband’ are fairly neutral.

Máo Zédōng yǒu sì ge qīzi	Mao had 4 wives.
Máo Zédōng yǒu sì ge lǎopó.	

Nèirén ‘wife (within-person)’ has a humble tone. Southerners often use xifu, a variant on xifù ‘daughter-in-law’, for wife, eg: Sǎozi shì gēge de xifu. ‘Saozi [sister-in-law] is the wife of one’s elder brother.’

The PRC used to promote the use of àirén ‘love-person’ as a egalitarian term for spouse (husband or wife), and the phrase zhè shì wǒ àirén is still current on the Mainland. The term causes some giggles among non-Mainlanders, for in Taiwan, àirén sometimes has the meaning of ‘sweetheart’. (Àirén is not the normal word for ‘lover,’ however; that is qíng rén ‘feelings-person’, the word used for the Chinese title of the French film, *The Lover*, for example.)

Another term that has come into vogue in informal situations on the Mainland is nèiwèi for ‘spouse’ (literally ‘that-one’). Peculiarly, it combines with a plural possessive pronoun even when the reference is singular: wǒmen nèiwèi ‘(our spouse) my

husband/wife’. This may be because it derives from the phrase wǒmen jiā de nèiwèi ‘our family DE spouse’. Thus: Nǐmen nèiwèi zěnmeyàng? ‘How’s the wife / the old man?’

Foreigners, though they may hear intimate or familiar terms, should be careful not to use them unless their relationship warrants it!

#### 4.9.3 Responses

A typical response to an introduction uses an appropriate title with the surname, and a conventional expression of greeting:

A, Qí lǎoshī, nín hǎo.

Oh, Prof. Qi, how are you?

The response to being introduced to someone of eminence is jiǔyǎng, literally ‘long+time-look+up+to’, often repeated as jiǔyǎng jiǔyǎng ‘[I]’ve heard a lot about you’. Sometimes dà míng ‘great name’ is added: jiǔyǎng dà míng.

O, Qí lǎoshī, jiǔyǎng, jiǔyǎng.

Oh, Prof. Qi, honored to meet you.

Children and sometimes young adults may show respect by addressing elders as shūshu ‘uncle’ or āyí ‘auntie’: Shūshu hǎo. ‘How are you, uncle.’

In English, we feel the need to confirm the worth of meeting someone by saying eg ‘nice to meet you’, either after an introduction, or at the end of an initial introduction, before taking leave. Traditionally, Chinese had no comparable expression, but nowadays, people in the more cosmopolitan cities, particularly when they are talking to foreigners, will use a phrase hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ (‘very happy know you’), or hěn gāoxìng jiàndào nǐ (‘very happy see you’), in more or less the same situations as English ‘nice to meet you’. The response may have a slightly different emphasis, expressed in the word order: Rènshi nǐ, wǒ yě hěn gāoxìng! ‘Happy to meet you too! = my pleasure!’.

A, Qí lǎoshī, hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ. Oh, Prof. Qi, nice to meet you.

#### 4.9.4 Dialogues

a) You [Wèi] are introducing your friend Chén Huībó to your classmate, a student from China named Cài Wénjiā. You get Cài’s attention by calling out her name, and as you guide her towards Chén, you explain to her who he is. Cài then (re)states her full name, and the two acknowledge each other.

CHÉN Huībó (m)

(CÀI) Wénjiā (f)

\*You [Wèi]

Wèi Cài Wénjiā, wǒ gěi nǐ jièshao  
jièshao; zhè shì wǒ de péngyou,  
Chén Huībó.

Cài Wénjiā, let me introduce you;  
this is my friend, Chen Huibo.

Cài Chén Huībó, nǐ hǎo; wǒ shì Chen Huibo, how are you? I'm  
Cài Wénjiā. Cài Wénjiā

Chén Cài Wénjiā, nǐ hǎo. Cài Wénjiā, how are you.

b) Now a relatively formal introduction, between people sharing a train cabin. (Hng = xìng Huáng de, jiàoshòu; Zh. = xìng Zhōu de, jīnglǐ.) Note the word for business card, míngpiàn, literally 'name-slice'.

Hng Eì, nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Huáng, Hi, how are you? My (sur)name's  
zhè shì wǒ de míngpiàn. Nín Huang; this is my card. What's  
guìxìng? your [sur]name?

(Looking at the card.)  
Zh O, Húang lǎoshī, nín hǎo. Wǒ jiào Oh, Prof. Huang, how are you?  
Zhōu Bǎolín – wǒ de míngpiàn. I'm named Zhou Baolin – my card.

(He too looks at the card.)  
Hng A Zhōu jīnglǐ, nín hǎo. O Ah. Manager Wang, how do you  
nín shì Wēiruǎn de! Wēiruǎn do? Oh, you're with Microsoft!  
hěn yǒumíng a! Microsoft's famous!

Wáng Hái xíng ba! I guess [if you say so].

Note

Wēiruǎn de 'of ~ from Microsoft (tiny-soft DE)'

### Exercise 6

a) Introductions:

Liáng Mínmin, a teacher, meets Dèng Lìlì also a teacher (both female) and introduces her student, Mǎ Yán (a male); fill in Dèng Lìlì's responses:

Liáng: Nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Liáng, jiào Liáng Mínmin.  
Dèng: ??  
Liáng: Dèng Lìlì, nǐ hǎo. Zhè shì Mǎ Yán, wǒ de xuéshēng.  
Dèng: ??  
Mǎ Dèng lǎoshī, hǎo. Rènshi nǐ, wǒ yě hěn gāoxìng.

b) Translate:

- 1) Miss Chén, this is my classmate, Wáng Bīnbīn.
- 2) This is my good friend, Bì Xiùqióng.
- 3) This is my younger sister, Chén Xiùxiù.
- 4) Professor Gāo, I've heard a lot about you.
- 5) Let me introduce you – this is Manager Wang, he's at Intel.
- 6) This is Li Dawei, he's been to China, and he's studying Chinese.



Dào Miányáng le ma? [JKW 2004]

#### 4.10 Dialogue: on the bus to Miányáng

*Méi Tàidé (Theo Meyering), a foreign student traveling by bus from Chéngdū to Miányáng [about 111 kms. to the northeast], is attempting to read the local paper; the man sitting next to him, who has been watching him for a while, breaks into conversation:*

Ōu-y Kàndedǒng ma?

Can you read [it]?

Méi: Néng kàndǒng yìdiǎnr.

I can read a bit.

Ōu-y: Hànzì hěn duō ya!

Chinese has a *lohhht* of characters!

Méi: Shì, tài duō le!

Yes, too many!

Ōu-y: Wǒ xìng Ōuyáng – zhè shì wǒ de míngpiàn.

My name's Ouyang – here's my card.

Méi: A, Ōuyáng xiānsheng... Ōuyáng jīnglǐ, nín hǎo! Hěn gāoxìng rènshi nín.

Oh, Mr. Ouyang... Manager Ouyang, how do you do! Nice to meet you.

Ōu-y: Zhè shì wǒ àiren, Xiāo Měifāng.

This is my wife, Xiao Meifang.

Méi	Nín hǎo. Wǒde míngzi shì Theo Meyering, Méi Tàidé: Tàiguó de Tàì, Déguó de Dé. Duìbuqǐ, xiànzài wǒ yǐjīng méiyǒu míngpiàn le.	Hello. My name's Theo Meyering, Mei Taide: the tai of Taiguo, the de of Deguo. I'm sorry, I'm already out of business cards.
Xiāo:	Méi Tàidé, Méi xiānsheng, nǐ hǎo. Nǐ Zhōngwén jiǎng+de zhēn bàng!	Mei Taide, Mr. Mei, how do you do? You speak Chinese reeeally well!
Méi:	Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, jiǎng+de māmāhūhū. Wǒ hái zài xué ne, wǒ zài Sìchuān Dàxué xuéxí.	Nice of you to say so [but] I speak poorly. I'm still studying [it] – I'm studying at Sichuan University.
Ōu-y:	Qǐngwèn nǐ shì cóng nǎ ge guójiā lái de?	May I ask what country you're from?
Méi:	Wǒ shì Hólán rén; wǒ shēng zai Hólán. Kěshì xiànzài wǒ shì Měiguó Mìxīgēn Dàxué de xuéshēng.	I'm from Holland; I was born in Holland. But at present, I'm a student at Michigan University.
Ōu-y	O, Mìxīgēn Dàxué, hěn yǒumíng. Nǐ shì jǐniánjí de xuéshēng?	Oh, Michigan University, it's famous. What year are you?
Méi:	Wǒ shì sìníánjí de.	I'm a senior.
Ōu-y	Nǐ shì Zhōngwén xì de ma?	Are you in the Chinese department?
Méi	Bù, wǒ shì Jīngjì xì de, wǒ xué Zhōngguó jīngjì... Ōuyáng xiānsheng, nín zài Chángchūn gōngzuò a?	No, I'm in economics, I'm studying Chinese economics. [So] you work in Changchun, Mr. Ouyang?
Ōu-y	Duì, wǒ zài Chángchūn gōngzuò, búguò wǒ shì Shěnyáng rén.	Yes, I work in Changchun, but I'm from Shenyang.
Méi:	Dōu zài Dōngběi, duì ba?	Both in the Northeast, right?
Ōu-y	Duì, Chángchūn zài Jílín shěng, Shěnyáng zài Liáoníng. Shěnyáng lí Běijīng bù yuǎn.	That's right, Changchun is in Jilin province, Shenyang is in Liaoning. Shenyang isn't far from Bj.
Měi:	Shěnyáng hěn dà, shì bu shì?	Shenyang's big, isn't it?
Ōu-y	Shì, yǒu chàbùduō wǔbǎiwàn rén ... Nǐ chīguò zhōngfàn le ma?	It is, it has about 5 million inhabitants...Have you had lunch?
Méi:	Chī le, zài Chéngdū chī le.	I have – in Chengdu.

- Ōu-y Nǐmen zhōngfàn dōu chī sānmíngzhì, shì bu shì? You eat sandwiches for lunch, right?
- Méi: Bù yídìng. Kěshì zài Zhōngguó, wǒ dāngrán chī Zhōngguó fàn. Not necessarily. But in China, I eat Chinese food of course.
- Ōu-y Zhōngguó fàn nǐ chīdeguàn ma? Are you accustomed to eating Chinese food?
- Méi: Dāngrán chīdeguàn, zài Hélán, zài Mèiguǒ, wǒ yě chángcháng chī Zhōngguó fàn. ...Dào Miányáng le ma? Of course I am, I often eat Chinese food in Holland and in the US. Have we reached Mianyang?
- Ōu-y Hái méi dào ne. Zhè shì Déyáng. Wǒmen zài zhèr xiàchē. Dàgài yì diǎn bàn dào Miányáng. Not yet. This is Deyang. We get off here. [You] get to Mianyang at about 1:30.
- Méi: Ōh, nǐmen zài Déyáng xiàchē? Oh, you get off at Deyang?
- Ōu-: Duì, wǒ yǒu ge jiějie zhù zài Déyáng. Yes, I have an older sister living in Deyang.
- Méi: Nǐmen de xíngli duō bu duō? Do you have a lot of bags?
- Ōu-: Bù duō – zhǐ yǒu yí jiàn. Hǎo, wǒmen xiàchē le. Zàijiàn! No, just one. Okay, we're getting off. Good bye!
- Méi: Hǎo, zàijiàn, zàijiàn! Okay, goodbye!

## Notes

kàndědǒng ‘can understand [by reading] (look-able+to-understand)’. Kàndědǒng is an example of what is sometimes known as the ‘potential construction’ (cf. §7.1), which involves an action (kàn) and result (dědǒng) and an intervening +de (able to) or bu (unable to). Thus kànbudědǒng ‘cannot understand [by reading]’. Other examples: chīdeguàn, appearing later in this dialogue, ‘be in the habit of eating (eat-get-accustomed)’; and earlier, in the rhyme at the end of Unit 2, shuāibudǎo ‘won’t fall down (slip-not-fall)’. The response to Ouyang’s question might have been kàndědǒng ‘I do’ but Méi is more modest, and wishes to use yìdiǎnr ‘a little’. Kàndědǒng or kànbudědǒng do not permit gradations – either you do, or you don’t; so the response with yìdiǎnr has to be néng kàndědǒng yìdiǎnr ‘can understand a bit’.

néng ‘able to; can’ [not usually for learned abilities]

- Ōuyáng      An example of one of the 40 or so disyllabic surnames. Tā xìng Ōuyáng. Méi Tàidé re-addresses him with jīnglǐ after reading his business card.
- Xiāo Měifāng      Notice the Méi Tàidé refrains from addressing Ōuyáng's wife with title or name. Neither tàitai nor xiǎojie is appropriate, and using her name might seem too familiar. So he just says nǐ hǎo.
- àirén      'spouse; wife; husband'. This is typical usage.
- zhēn bàng      bàng is a noun, meaning 'club' or 'cudgel'; but in colloquial speech, it has come to function as a SV with the meaning 'good; strong'; cf. English 'smashing'. The expression is more common in certain regions than others, and probably certain age groups than others.
- chīdeguàn      'in the habit of eating (eat-get-accustomed)'
- jiàn      M-word for 'luggage' (and, paradoxically, for 'clothes' and 'business affairs' as well).

#### 4.11 Food (1)

In China, meals are central to social life. But for the student of Chinese, who may have to eat most meals out, learning how to read the menu and order meals takes a long time. Eating at Chinese restaurants overseas may give the impression that there is a set of basic dishes at the heart of every Chinese regional cuisine. But within China, menus start to seem infinitely variable. And what is more, you will find that rather than consulting the menu, Chinese customers are just as likely to base their orders on a conversation with the waiter about what is seasonal or fresh, or what the restaurant's specialties are. So we will have to build up competence about Chinese food incrementally. We will begin with elementary categories.

The basic distinction in food is between fàn and cài. Both words have core and extended meanings, as follows:

fàn	cooked rice	>	staples
cài	vegetables	>	dishes; courses

Fàn in its extended meaning includes cooked rice, wheat, millet and other grains that – at least in less affluent times – formed the main caloric intake. Cài in its extended meaning would normally have been vegetables, with some dry or fresh fish, and very occasionally, a small amount of pork. Now, of course, cài includes the vast repertoire of dishes that can be served alongside the staples. Any ambiguity between core and extended meanings can be eliminated through compounding:

báifàn; mǐfàn	cooked rice [as opposed to other staples]
qīngcài	vegetables [as opposed to other dishes]

Rice is the staple of southern China where it is eaten cooked (mǐfàn), or ground into flour for noodles (mǐfěn) and dumpling wraps. In the north, wheat is the staple and forms the basis of wheat noodles (miàn ~ miàntiáo) and wheat dumpling-wraps. At breakfast and lunch, Chinese often eat a rice gruel or ‘congee’ (xīfàn ‘watery rice’ or zhōu), to which can be added various kinds of vegetables, meats and sauces, as well as broken up yóutiáo ‘fried dough sticks’.

miàn ~ miàntiáo	noodles	miànbāo	bread (wheat-bun)
mǐfěn	rice-flour noodles	dòufu	toufu
zhōu; xīfàn	rice porridge; congee	yóutiáo	fried dough sticks
bāozi	steamed stuffed buns		
guōtiē	pot stickers	jiǎozi	dumplings
tāng	soup	jīdàn	chicken eggs
ròu	meat	yā<ròu>	duck
zhūròu	pork	jī<ròu>	chicken
niúròu	beef	yáng ròu	lamb
yú	fish	hǎixiān	seafood
xiārén<r>	shrimp meat	hǎishēn	sea cucumber

### Notes

- In combinations, parts of these citation forms are often dropped. In most cases, it is the second element: niúròu-miàn[tiáo] ‘beef noodles’. But in some cases, it is the first: niúròu-chǎo [mǐ]fěn ‘beef fried rice-noodles’.
- On a menu, unspecified ròu usually means ‘pork’.
- Many Chinese avoid eating beef because of Buddhist tradition, and because of taboos about killing work animals.
- Xiā is ‘shrimp’, rén<r> is ‘kernel’, so xiārénr ‘shrimp meat’.
- Sea cucumber is a euphemistic name for a kind of slug that lives on the bottom of the sea; eaten fresh, or dried, it is considered a delicacy.



Qīngzhēn xiānjī 'Muslim fresh chicken' at a street stall in Kunming. [JKW 1997]



## 4.11.1 Short narratives

## a) Zhōngguó rén zuì xǐhuan hē shénme?

Yǒu péngyou wèn wǒ Zhōngguó rén zuì xǐhuan hē shénme. Wǒ shuō chuántǒng de Zhōngguó rén xǐhuan hē chá huòzhě báikāishuǐ, kěshì xiànzài hěn duō Zhōngguó rén yě xǐhuan hē qìshuǐ, kělè, hé niúǎi. Zhōngguó nánrén yě xǐhuan hē píjiǔ. Qīngdǎo píjiǔ shì zuì yǒumíng de Zhōngguó píjiǔ. Wǒ yě xǐhuan hē píjiǔ, kěshì bù néng hē tài duō, yì píng jiù gòu le! Zǎoshàng, wǒ yě hē kāfēi – hē yì bēi wǒ jiù bú huì juéde lèi!

## b) Zuì xǐhuan chī shénme?

Nà, Zhōngguó rén zuì xǐhuan chī shénme? Zhè hěn nán shuō. Yīnwèi Zhōngguó rén chī de dōngxī tài duō le. Kěyǐ shuō běifāng rén bǐjiào xǐhuan chī miànshí, jiùshì yòng xiǎomàifěn zuò de shípǐn; nánfāng rén ne, tāmen bǐjiào xǐhuan chī mǐfàn. Měitiān dāngrán chī qīngcài, yě chī yìdiǎnr ròu, xiàng zhūròu, jīròu, niúròu. Ménggǔrén yě tèbié xǐhuan chī yáng ròu. Zhōngguó rén yě cháng chī hǎixiān, xiàng yú, xiārénr, hǎishēn. Yě xǐhuan chī bāozi, jiǎozi; zhèi lèi dōngxī kěyǐ shuō shì Zhōngguó chuántǒng de kuàicān. Língshí ne, tǐng duō de! Yǒu niúròugānr, guāzǐ<r>, huàméi.

## Notes

yǒu péngyou	While English comfortably begins a sentence with an indefinite phrase such as ‘a friend’ or ‘someone’, Chinese makes use of the existential <u>yǒu</u> ‘there is/are...’: <u>Yǒu rén wèn wǒ</u> ...; <u>Yǒu rén shuō</u> .
chuántǒng	SV ‘traditional’.
báikāishuǐ	‘clear boiled water’
miànshí	‘cooked wheaten food’; cf. <u>shípǐn</u> . In Mandarin <u>shí</u> is a combining root that appears in compounds having to do with food, eg <u>shípǐn</u> , <u>língshí</u> , below. It is cognate with Cantonese <u>sìhk</u> , the verb ‘to eat’.
jiùshì	[in this context] ‘ie’
xiǎomài	‘wheat’; cf. <u>dàmài</u> ‘barley’, <u>yànmài</u> ‘oats’, <u>qiámài</u> ‘buckwheat’
shípǐn	‘food; comestibles’
Ménggǔ	Mongolia; cf. <u>Nèi Ménggǔ</u> ‘Inner Mongolia’.
tèbié	SV ‘special’; ADV ‘especially’.
zhèi lèi	‘this type’, and particularly in the expression <u>zhèi lèi dōngxī</u> ‘these sorts ~ categories of things’; cf. <u>zhèi zhǒng</u> ‘this kind’.
kuàicān	‘fast-food’
língshí	‘nibbles; snacks (zero; incidental-food)’
niúròugānr	‘beef jerky’; <u>yí dài</u> ‘a bag’
guāzǐ<r>	‘water melon seeds’
huàméi	‘preserved plums’; <u>yì bāo</u> ‘a packet’

### 4.12 Pinyin: initial w and y

Though syllables may begin with the vowels a, o, e (eg è, ān, ōu etc.), *they do not* begin with i or u. Where medial i and u might occur at the beginning of a syllable, they are written y and w, respectively. You might think of such cases as follows:

duo, shuo, drop the Ci:	uo	>	wo
xie, bie, drop the Ci:	ie	>	ye

However, if i, u, ü are themselves vowels (as in nǐ, shū, nǚ), then dropping the Ci would leave only the vowels i, u, and ü, and if these were simply rewritten as y and w, you would end up with rather curious looking syllables like ‘w’ (shu, drop the Ci to get u > ‘w’) or ‘wn’ (shun > un > ‘wn’). So in such cases, instead of upgrading i and u to y and w as before, y and w are **added** to them:

	<i>as a syllable</i>		
ji, drop the j:	i	>	yi
jin, drop the j:	in	>	yin
jing, drop the j:	ing	>	ying
shu, drop the sh:	u	>	wu
xu, drop the x:	u [ü]	>	yu
jun, drop the j:	un [ün]	>	yun
xue, drop the x:	ue [üe]	>	yue

There are a few **exceptions** to the pattern:

>>	jiu, drop the j:	iu >	<b>you;</b>	<u>yu</u> is taken [see above]
>>	gui, drop the g:	ui >	<b>wei;</b>	no syllable <u>wi</u> ; rhymes with <u>ei</u>
>>	zhun, drop the zh:	un >	<b>wen;</b>	no syllable ‘wun’; rhymes with <u>en</u>



Yí duì fūfù ('1 pair husband-wife') zhǐ shēng yí ge háizi hǎo. [JKW 1997]

**Exercise 7.**

Recognizing foreign place names: With your knowledge of pinyin, see if you can read out and recognize these Chinese versions of English place names and other English loans:

<i>a) Place names</i>	<i>hint</i>	<i>English</i>
Fóluólǐdǎ		
Yàlisāngnà		
Mǎsàzhūsài		
Nèibùlāsījiā		
Éhài'ér		
Élègāng	Yes, it's a state.	
Zhījiāgē	city	
Àidīngbǎo	in Scotland	
Hóngdūlāsī	Central America	
Ālāsījiā		
Àodàliyà		
Bāxī		
Dálāsī	in Texas	
Xīn Ào'ěrliáng		
Bājisītǎn		
<i>b) Common nouns</i>		
qiǎokeli or zhūgǔli	food	
sānmíngzhì	food	
hànbǎobāo		
qīsī ~ zhīshì hànbǎobāo		
shālā	leafy food	
pǐsà bǐng	fast food ( <u>bǐng</u> 'biscuit; cracker')	
kěkǒukělè		
Màidāngláo		
Hànbǎowáng	wáng 'king'	
<i>c) People (Mainland usage)</i>		
Shāshìbǐyà		
Suǒfēiyà Luólán		
Mǎlóng Báilándù	'The horror, the horror!'	
Àosēn Wēi'ěrsī		
Gélǐgāoli Pàikè		
Yīnggélì Bāomán		
Luósīfǔ	4 terms	
Gé'ěrbāqiáofǔ	USSR	
Shīwǎxīngé	'I'll be back – as governor!'	
Pàwǎluódì	Big stage presence!	

## 4.13 Summary

Existence	Zhèr yǒu xǐshǒujiān ma? / Yǒu, xǐshǒujiān zài hòutou.
Location:	Zhèr fùjìn yǒu Zhōngguó fànguǎnr ma? / Yǒu liǎng ge.
Born in...	Tā shēng zài Běijīng, yě zhǎng zài Běijīng, kěshi xiànzài zhù zài Xī'ān.
Clock time	Xiànzài jǐ diǎn <zhōng> le? / Shí diǎn. Wǒ wǎnshàng liǎng diǎn shuìjiào, zǎoshàng shí diǎn qǐlái.
Habitually	Zhōngguó rén píngcháng jǐ diǎn chī zǎodiǎn?
Tickets	Guìlín, jīntiān xiàwǔ 3:25, yìngzuò, yì zhāng.
DE	Shìjièbēi de xiāoxi; bù hǎotīng de yīnyuè shēngnǐ de shēng, dàlù de lù Tā shì IBM de.
No DE	tā dìdi; lǎo péngyou; zhème duō xínglǐ
Names	Guìxìng? / Wǒ xìng Bái, jiào Bái Sùzhēn.
Age	Nín <niánjì> duō dà le? / Zhǐ yǒu shíqī suì.
Sign	Nǐ <shì> shǔ shénme de? / Shǔ mǎ de.
Level	Nǐ shì jǐ niánjī de xuésheng? / Sān niánjī de.
Major	Zhuānyè shì shénme? / Shì wùlǐ.
Department	Nǐ zài nǐ ge xì? ~ Nǐ shì nǐ ge xì de?
Zài + V	Tā hái zài dúshū.
Studying	Tā zài túshūguǎn xuéxí.
Titles	Lǐ xiàozhǎng; Qián jīnglǐ
Introductions	Zhāng lǎoshī, wǒ gěi nǐ jièshào jièshào; zhè<i wèi> shì...
Nice to meet..	Jiǔyǎng, jiǔyǎng; hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ.
Understand?	Kàndèdǒng ma? / Néng kàndǒng yìdiǎnr.
Work	Tā zài Cháng Chūn gōngzuò. / Tā gàn shénme huó ne?
Used to doing	Zhōngguó cài nǐ chīdeguān ma?
Rice, wheat	Běifāng rén bǐjiào xǐhuān chī miàntiáo, nánfāng rén bǐjiào xǐhuān chī mǐfàn.
Someone...	Yǒu rén wèn wǒ....

**Exercise 8**

Vocabulary practice: Incorporate each of the following in a brief phrase that shows you know the meaning, eg: shàngwǔ > jīntiān shàngwǔ.

juéde	jièshào	fēicháng	jīchǎng
yàoshi	yǐjīng	yíding	yígòng
xiāoxi	xiànzài	mǐfèn	máfan
yìqiān	yìqián	qiánmiàn	mùqián
shíchā	zhuānyè	shàngwǔ	xiàwǔ
duōshao	dōu shì	zuǒbianr	gànhuó<r>
jiǔyǎng	yángjiǔ	shàngbān	jīngcháng
zhōngwǔ	Zhōngwén	zhōngtōu	zhōngbù
bàngōngshì	yánjiūshēng	jīchǎng	chǎngzhǎng
niánjì	mǐfàn	xīfàn	yěxǔ

## 4.14 Rhymes and rhythms

a) First, a traditional rhyme for the (lunar) new year which mentions several new-year customs, such as buying new clothes and setting off fire crackers.

Xīnnián dào, xīnnián dào,  
chuān xīn yī, dài xīn mào,  
pīpī pāpā fàng biānpào!

New year arrives, new year arrives  
wear new clothes, wear new hat  
*pipi papa* set-off firecrackers.

b) This next rhyme tells the story of life in a factory – from the workers’ point of view:

Èrlóu sānlóu, chángzhǎng shūjì  
sílóu, wǔlóu, qīnqī guānxi,  
gōngrén jiējí, dǐngtiān-lìdì,  
zhīzú chánglè, zán bù shēngqì.

2nd floor, 3rd floor, factory-head sect’y  
4th floor, 5th floor, kin connections  
workers (social) class, salt-of-the-earth  
be content with one’s lot, we not angry.

*[Overheard at a seminar on Chinese language teaching, Harvard, 2002.]*

Notes:

shūjì	secretary of a political or other organization (‘book-note+down’)
dǐngtiān-lìdì	be of indomitable spirit (‘support-sky set+up-ground’)
zhīzú chánglè	be content with one’s lot and be happy (‘know-enough happiness’)
zán	a reduced form of <u>zámen</u>

## Appendix 1: Courses of study and university names

### 1. Courses of study

yǔyánxué	linguistics (language-study)
wénxué	literature (writing-study)
bǐjiào-wénxué	comparative literature
lìshǐ<xué>	history
rénlèixué	anthropology (man-kind)
yīnyuè	music
shāngyè	business (business-occupation)
guǎnlǐ<xué>	management (manage-study)
chéngshì-guǎnlǐxué	urban planning (city-manage-study)
jiànzhù<xué>	architecture
jīngjì<xué>	economics
wùlǐ<xué>	physics (things-principles)
huàxué	chemistry (transformation-study)
shēngwù<xué>	biology (life-matter)
yíchuánxué ~ jīyīnxué	genetics (heredity-study ~ gene-study)
dànnǎo-rènzhīxué	brain and cognitive science
shùxué	mathematics (number-study)
yīxué	medicine

*engineering*

gōngchéng<xué>	engineering
jìsuànjī<xué> [Mainland]	computer science (calculate+machine)
diànnǎo<xué> [Taiwan]	computer science (electric-brain)
diànzǐ gōngchéng<xué>	electrical engineering
tǔmù gōngchéng<xué>	civil engineering (earth-wood)
jīxiè gōngchéng<xué>	mechanical engineering
hángkōng gōngchéng<xué>	aeronautical engineering
hángkōng hángtiān<xué>	aero-astro (aviation space+flight)
cáiliào gōngchéng<xué>	material science (material engineering)

**2. The names of universities**

Most non-Chinese universities have sinicized versions of their names, eg: Gēlúnbǐyà Dàxué ‘Columbia University’. There are some exceptions: the Chinese names for Oxford and Cambridge Universities are translations of their etymological meanings, ie Niú Jīn ‘Ox-Ford’ and Jiàn Qiáo ‘Cam-Bridge’ [the Cam being the name of the river that runs through Cambridge]. MIT is also translated: Máshěng Lǐgōng Xuéyuàn, literally ‘Massachusetts Science Institute’. The names of Chinese Universities often combine a location with dàxué ‘university (big-learning)’. Some university names can be shortened: eg Běijīng Dàxué > Běi Dà; Táiwān Dàxué > Tái Dà. Here, for reference, are the names of some other well-known universities:

*a) Non-Chinese*

Kāngnǎi’ěr Dàxué ~ Kāng Dà	Cornell University
Gēlúnbǐyà Dàxué ~ Gē Dà	Columbia University
Hāfó Dàxué	Harvard University
Yēlǔ Dàxué	Yale University
Pǔlínshìdùn Dàxué	Princeton University
Dùkè Dàxué	Duke University
Shītǎnfú ~ Sītǎnfú	Stanford University
Bókèlì Dàxué	UC Berkeley
Mìxīgēn Dàxué	University of Michigan
Míngdé Dàxué ~ Míng Dà	Middlebury College, Vermont
Lúndūn Dàxué	London University
Niú Jīn Dàxué	Oxford University
Jiàn Qiáo Dàxué	Cambridge University
Àozhōu Guólì Dàxué (Ào Dà)	Australian National University (ANU)

*b) Chinese:*

Běijīng Dàxué ~ Běi Dà	Peking University, in n.w. Beijing
Qīnghuá Dàxué	Tsinghua University, in n.w. Beijing
Běijīng Shīfàn Dàxué ~ Běishī Dà	Beijing Normal University
Běijīng Hángkōng (Hángtiān) Dàxué ~ Háng Dà	Beijing University of Aeronautics [and Astronautics]

Rénmín Dàxué ~ Rén Dà  
 Nánkāi Dàxué (~ Nándà)  
 Nánjīng Dàxué ~ Nándà  
 Fùdàn Dàxué  
 Jiāotōng Dàxué  
 Zhōngshān Dàxué  
 Guólì Táiwān Dàxué~ Tái Dà

People's University, Beijing  
 Nankai University, in Tianjin  
 Nanjing University, in Nanjing  
 Fudan University, in Shanghai  
 Shanghai Jiaotong ('Communications') U.  
 Sun Yat-sen University, Canton  
 National Taiwan University, in Taipei

## Appendix 2: The 45 most common surnames

Though it is peculiar to present surnames as sound alone, without characters, it is useful for learners to be familiar with the pronunciation of at least the most common surnames. So 45 names (including those already encountered) are provided below. They are organized in groups of 10, each with an exemplar from Chinese history. The frequency list of surnames is taken from Shan Lin's *What's in a Chinese Name* (Singapore: Federal Publications, 1981). According to this book, the first 10 names account for 40% of the population, the second 10, for 10%, the third ten, for 10% and the all 45, for 70% of the population (p.17).

Since many Chinese resident in the US and Europe are of Cantonese or other heritage, the varied spelling of surnames frequently conforms to the sound of regional languages. To give some sense of this range, Cantonese pronunciations are also provided, on the right, in the Yale system of romanization. In this system, Cantonese is analyzed as having three tones in two registers, one high and one low. The high set is marked as á, a, and à, and the low set as ah, ah, and ah (with 'a' standing in for all vowels).

<i>Xìng</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Cantonese pronunciation</i>
Zhāng	Zhāng Xuéliáng (1901 - 2001 ) NE China leader in 1920s	Jeùng
Wáng	Wáng Ānshí (1021 - 1081) poet and reformer	Wòhng
Lǐ	Lǐ Sī (3 <sup>rd</sup> C BCE) chancellor to Qín emperor	Leíh
Zhào	Zhào Ziyáng (1919 - 2005) PRC politician	Jiuh
Chén	Chén Yì (1901 - 72) PRC military commander	Chàhn
Yáng	Yáng Guǐfēi (8 <sup>th</sup> C) famous concubine	Yeùhng
Wú	Wú Sānguī (17 <sup>th</sup> C ) general who 'let the Manchus in'	Ngh (')
Liú	Liú Bāng (247-195 BCE) 1st emperor of Hàn	Laùh
Huáng	Huángdì (trad. 2698 - 2598 BCE) Yellow Emperor	Wòhng
Zhōu	Zhōu Ēnlái (1898 -1976) first PRC premier	Jaù
Xú	Xú Zhímó (1896 - 1931) poet and essayist	Cheuih
Zhū	Zhū Yuánzhāng (1328 - 1399 ) 1st Ming emperor	Jyù
Lín	Lín Biāo (1907 - 1971) once designated to succeed Máo	Làhm
Sūn	Sūn Yìxiān (1866 -1925) Sun Yat Sen aka Sūn Zhōngshān	Syùn
Mǎ	Mǎ Yuán (14BCE - 49) conqueror of Vietnam in 42 AD	Máh
Gāo	Gāo Chái (6th C BCE) a disciple of Confucius	Goù
Hú	Hú Shì (1891 - 1962) promoted vernacular writing	Wùh

Zhèng	Zhèng Hé (15 <sup>th</sup> C) led voyages to SEA and Africa	Jehng	
Guō	Guō Mòruò (1892 -1978) playwright, writer	Gok	
Xiāo	Xiāo Hé (2 <sup>nd</sup> C BCE) advisor to Liú Bāng	Siù	
Xiè	Xiè Xiǎo'é (8th, 9th C) avenged death of kin	Jeh	
Hé	Hé Diǎn (436 - 504) reclusive scholar		Hòh
Xǔ	Xǔ Xùn (240 - 374) magician and dragon slayer	Heúi	
Sòng	Sòng Qínglíng (1892 -1982) wife of Sun Yatsen	Sung	
Shěn	Shěn Yuē (441 - 513) scholar with double-pupil eyes	Sám	
Luó	Luó Gōngyuǎn (8th C?) magician	Lòh	
Hán	Hán Yù (768 - 824) Tang scholar	Hòhn	
Dèng	Dèng Xiǎopíng (1904 -1997) post-Mao leader	Dahng	
Liáng	Liáng Qǐchāo (1873 -1929) early 20th C intellectual	Leùhng	
Yè	Yè Míngshēn (1807 - 60) Governor of Canton	Yihp	
Fāng	Fāng Guózhēn (14 <sup>th</sup> C) pirate, and governor	Fòng	
Cuī	Cuī Jiàn, PRC's first major rock star	Cheúi	
Chéng	Chéng Miǎo (3 <sup>rd</sup> C BCE) inventor of small seal characters	Chìhng	
Pān	Pān Fēi (5th-6th C) concubine, intro' foot binding?	Pònn	
Cáo	Cáo Cāo (155 - 220) general from 3 Kingdoms period	Chouh	
Féng	Féng Yǒulán (1895 -1990) philospher	Fuhng	
Wāng	Wāng Lái (18th C) mathematician	Wòng	
Cài	Cài Shùn (1st C) one of the 24 examples of filialpiety	Choi	
Yuán	Yuán Shìkǎi (1859 -1916) first president of ROC	Yùhn	
Lú	Lú Shēng (8th C) young lad in the Dream of Yellow Millet	Loùh	
Táng	Táng Yín (1470 -1523) scholar and painter (Sūzhōu school)	Tòhng	
Qián	Qián Liú (851 - 932) warrior prince	Chìhn	
Dù	Dù Fǔ (712 -70) reknowned poet	Douh	
Péng	Péng Zǔ (2nd millennium BCE) a Chinese Methuselah	Pàhng	
Lù	Lù Yú (9 <sup>th</sup> C) famous hermit	Luhk	



MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

Resource: Learning Chinese: A Foundation Course in Mandarin  
Dr. Julian K. Wheatley

The following may not correspond to a particular course on MIT OpenCourseWare, but has been provided by the author as an individual learning resource.

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.