

*The* WAY  
*of* CHINESE  
CHARACTERS

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漢字之道

*The* ORIGINS *of*  
670 ESSENTIAL WORDS

SECOND EDITION

JIANHSIN WU

ILLUSTRATED BY CHEN ZHENG AND CHEN TIAN



CHENG & TSUI

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BOSTON

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Second Edition

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## ABOUT *the* AUTHOR

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SAMPLE

# PREFACE

Mastering characters is often the most challenging task for learners of Chinese. Unlike an alphabetical language with a writing system composed of a limited number of letters, the Chinese writing system is built upon about 200 radicals, which are the most basic components of Chinese characters. (Radicals, along with stroke counts, also provide the organizing principle for Chinese dictionaries.) Although there are over 50,000 Chinese characters, 2,500 characters are required for basic literacy. Furthermore, the pronunciation of a particular character does not necessarily relate to its meaning. The sheer number of Chinese characters, in addition to the frequent lack of visual pronunciation guides, makes character memorization a significant challenge for many.

Paradoxically, this complexity is precisely what draws many people to learn Chinese. The presence of pictographic elements in Chinese characters is one of the unique and fascinating aspects of the language. Most radicals, for example, are pictographs, or visual representations of objects or concepts. Given a pictograph, learners can turn the character into a vivid picture, or associate the character with a shape, color, sound, smell, feeling, emotion, movement, or action. When using this method of employing pictographs as memory aids, students will find that learning Chinese characters can be enjoyable, and can provide valuable insight into Chinese culture.

We believe that each and every Chinese character is a crystallization of the wisdom and creativity of our ancient Chinese ancestors. When given the logical and historical origins of each character, as described in this book, learners can also remember characters in an efficient and intelligent manner, rather than mechanically reproducing strokes that may seem meaningless to them. Students can also acquire knowledge of Chinese history and culture while learning the origins and evolution of characters, as their pictographic features often reflect vivid aspects of ancient life, such as agricultural and domestic life, war, trade materials, crafts, rituals, etc.

After studying *The Way of Chinese Characters*, learners will understand pictographic forms, interpret the logic behind the meanings of characters, and know something about the ancient forms of the most commonly occurring characters.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE SECOND EDITION?

The second edition of *The Way of Chinese Characters* includes over 220 more characters than the first edition. It now covers all the characters in both Part 1 and Part 2 of *Integrated Chinese Level 1*. The book has also been redesigned to be easier to read and carry, and reordered alphabetically by *pinyin* to make it easier to find characters. New example words and phrases have been added to each entry to help students learn how each character is used.

## SELECTION AND PRESENTATION OF CHARACTERS

The 670 characters included in this book are frequently used in modern Chinese, and cover all the characters in the glossary of *Integrated Chinese, Level 1, Part 1* and *Level 1, Part 2* (by Yuehua Liu, Tao-chung Yao, et. al.), the Chinese textbook most widely used at schools across the United States.





Explanations are given in both English and Chinese. The English entries are meant for beginning and intermediate students, while the Chinese entries may serve as references for teachers and advanced learners.

For each entry, we display the character in its various ancient scripts (see Types of Script below), and we include each character's classification, which indicates how the character was constructed (see Types of Characters below). Most characters have illustrations that help readers instantly connect the characters' pictographic elements to their meanings, both ancient and modern. Some characters are not accompanied by illustrations. Many of these are pictophonetic characters that have developed meanings largely unrelated to their visual aspects.

Also included are four indexes, organized alphabetically by *pinyin*, by *Integrated Chinese* lesson, and by stroke count (of both traditional and simplified characters), respectively. We hope all readers will find these indexes convenient and practical.

## TYPES OF SCRIPT

### KEY TO SCRIPT TYPES

SYMBOL	SCRIPT	EXAMPLES (報)	SYMBOL	SCRIPT	EXAMPLES (報)
甲	Oracle-Bone Inscriptions		篆	Seal Script	
金	Bronze Inscriptions		草	Cursive Script	

The characters in *The Way of Chinese Characters* are written in “Regular Script” (or traditional characters) and simplified characters. Regular Script can be traced to the late Han Dynasty (207 B.C.–220 A.D.) and is still used in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and many overseas Chinese communities. Simplified characters were introduced and promoted by the government of the People's Republic of China in the 1950s, and have since remained the standard in mainland China.

In this book we focus on Regular Script, or traditional form, because we have found that it is often difficult for beginning learners to appreciate the visual flavor of simplified Chinese characters. We present the ancient forms of the characters and provide illustrations, so that students can identify characters' original pictographic traits. We hope that with such imagery in mind, students will have a much easier time remembering Chinese characters.

This book also introduces other forms of Chinese script including “Oracle-Bone Inscriptions 甲骨文,” “Bronze Inscriptions 金文,” “Seal Script 篆文,” and “Cursive Script 草書.” “Oracle-Bone Inscriptions”

come from carvings on ox bones or tortoise shells, which were used during the Shang Dynasty (ca.1600–ca.1100 B.C.) to record events and devise predictions. “Bronze Inscriptions” are found on bronze vessels of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties (Zhou Dynasty: ca. 1100–ca. 221 B.C.). “Seal Script” includes both “Big Seal Script” and “Small Seal Script.” The former was used in the Qin State during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (ca. 770–ca. 221 B.C.) and the latter became official in the Qin Dynasty (221–207 B.C.). As an abbreviated form of traditional Chinese characters, “Cursive Script” originates from the Han Dynasty (207 B.C.–220 A.D.). These characters are written swiftly such that the strokes flow together, and were thus considered an artistic form of Chinese calligraphy. Many of the simplified characters used in mainland China today were born out of this cursive style.

In the book, we display each character in its various forms: Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, Bronze Inscriptions, and Seal Script, alongside Regular Script and simplified forms. You will notice that some characters are without ancient forms, however, such as 她 (tā, she), 您 (nín, polite form of the pronoun you), and 啤 (pí, beer), as these were created in later periods. Cursive Script is also shown for those simplified characters which were derived from the cursive style.

## TYPES OF CHARACTERS

Chinese characters are constructed differently from alphabetic languages. According to the Han dynasty scholar Xu Shen, in his *Analysis and Explanation of Characters*, they can be divided into six basic categories: pictographs (象形), explicit characters (指事), associative compounds (會意), pictophonetic characters (形聲), mutually explanatory characters (轉注), and phonetic loan characters (假借).

Pictographs delineate the shape of certain objects or their parts. Examples include: 木 (mù, wood; tree), 刀 (dāo, knife), 女 (nǚ, woman), and 馬 (mǎ, horse). Although such characters are relatively easy to identify, the limitation of this particular category is that pictographs cannot convey more abstract meanings.

Explicit characters are simple diagrammatic indications of abstract ideas, such as 上 (shàng, above), or 下 (xià, below). Others are formed with the addition of a symbol to an existing pictograph, such as 本 (běn, root; basic), or 刃 (rèn, edge). Explicit characters constructed via this method comprise only a small proportion of all Chinese characters.

The meanings of associative compound characters are derived from their components, which may combine two or more ideographs. Examples include 明 (míng, bright, the combination of 日 rì, sun and 月 yuè, moon), and 森 (sēn, forest, the combination of three trees 木 mù).

The majority of Chinese characters are pictophonetic, which combine semantic and phonetic components. For instance, the character 媽 (mā, mother) consists of 女 (nǚ, female) and 馬 (mǎ, horse). 女 suggests the general meaning of the character while 馬 signals its pronunciation.

According to Xu Shen, mutually explanatory (or synonymous) characters refer to those that are of the same or similar meanings, and thus can be used to define one another, e.g., 老 (lǎo, old; aged) and

考 (kǎo, aged; long life; test). However, the exact meaning of this category is ambiguous. Some contemporary scholars consider that the characters in this category actually refer to those later invented characters for recovering their original meanings. A common way to make this type of character is to add radicals or other components to the original characters. The character 蛇 (shé, snake) is an example from this category. The character 它 (tā) was a pictograph of a cobra-like snake and originally meant “snake”. Later 它 was borrowed to mean “other,” “it,” etc., and these meanings overwhelmed its original meaning. Therefore, a worm radical 虫 was added to the left of 它 to make a new character 蛇.

Phonetic loan characters refer to those that originally had no written form, and so borrowed existing characters of the same or similar pronunciation. For example, the character 我 resembles a weapon with a saw-toothed blade and long shaft, and originally referred to a kind of ancient weapon. Because the pronunciation of this character is similar to that of the pronoun “I,” 我 was borrowed to mean “I” or “me.”

## USING THIS BOOK AS A TEACHING TOOL

This book is the result of a serious, meticulous, and extensive study of the origins of Chinese characters. Many of the books currently on the market on this topic offer learners imaginative, yet inaccurate pictorial representations of characters. While imagination can help learners remember Chinese characters, such historically groundless explanations may misinform them. This book’s academic, accurate, and straightforward explanations allow learners to study Chinese characters thoughtfully, but without the risk of becoming overwhelmed by overly detailed information on origin and evolution.

It is our belief that this book will provide teachers with a new, efficient, interesting, and scholarly way to teach Chinese characters to learners of Chinese, as well as learners of Japanese and Korean, whose writing systems employ Chinese characters.

The characters in this edition have been organized by *pinyin* for easy and universal reference, with separate sections for some Basic Radicals and numerals. New students of Chinese should first familiarize themselves with these radicals and numerals, as they will make learning more complex characters easier. Multiple indexes have been provided to help students and teachers look up specific characters.

## USING THIS BOOK WITH *INTEGRATED CHINESE*

*The Way of Chinese Characters* contains all the characters taught in *Integrated Chinese Level 1 Part 1* and *Level 1 Part 2*. Students of *Integrated Chinese* should use the “Character Index by *Integrated Chinese Lesson*” to easily find each character grouped by lesson as they proceed through the course.

It is our expectation that this book will benefit all learners of Chinese characters, especially those who have difficulty memorizing numerous characters. In short, we hope that reading *The Way of Chinese Characters* helps learners overcome the obstacles to memorizing Chinese characters in an academically sound and creatively engaging way.

*Jianhsin Wu*



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# BASIC RADICALS

RADICALS are components of Chinese characters which often indicate the character's meaning. They are useful to know not only because they can provide clues to the meanings of characters, but also because many Chinese dictionaries are organized by radicals. Most radicals are common characters (often pictographs) and can be used on their own in addition to being components in more complicated characters like associative compounds and pictophonetic characters. When used as components, radicals may appear in variant forms. For example, 心 (heart) may appear as 心 or 忄 in compound characters.

See the "Types of Script" section on page vi of the Preface for more information about the different scripts.



**rén**  
man; person



**PICTOGRAPH** In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 人 presents the profile of a person with a head, an arched back, arms and legs, possibly indicating a figure from an early stage of human evolution. In Regular Script, 人 looks like someone with two rather long legs. As a radical, 人 often appears as 亻, and is often used in characters related to human beings and their activities, e.g., 你 (nǐ, you), 他 (tā, he; him), 住 (zhù, to live), and 休 (xiū, to rest).

**人** 象形。甲骨文、金文像人側立之形。

甲 亻 金 亻 篆 人

人民 rénmín the people  
客人 kèrén visitor; guest; customer

人們 rénmén people; the public  
病人 bìngrén sick person; patient



**dāo**  
knife



**PICTOGRAPH** In ancient writing systems, the character 刀 resembles a knife, with the upper part as the handle and the lower part as the edge. In Regular Script, the handle is shortened so that it becomes almost unnoticeable. Characters with the knife radical 刂 usually have something to do with knives or cutting, such as 别 (bié, to separate), 刺 (cì, to stab), and 利 (lì, sharp).

**刀** 象形。像刀形。上像刀柄，下像刀刃及刀背。

甲 刀 篆 刀

刀子 dāozi knife  
剪刀 jiǎndāo scissors

刀刃 dāorèn knife blade  
開刀 kāidāo to perform or have an operation

力

lì  
power; strength



PICTOGRAPH In both the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 力 resembles an ancient plow, with the upper part as the handle and the lower part as the plowshare. Since plowing requires great physical strength, 力 means “strength.” In Regular Script, 力 is similar in form to 刀 (dāo, knife) except that its top sticks out.

力 象形。甲骨文、金文均像耕田用具。因耕田要有力，引申為力氣。

甲 𠂔 金 𠂔 篆 𠂔

力氣 lìqì strength  
精力 jīnglì energy

能力 nénglì capability; ability  
有力 yǒulì strong; powerful; vigorous

又

yòu  
right hand; again



PICTOGRAPH In its ancient form, the character 又 was shaped like a right hand, meaning “right hand.” Today 又 is used to mean “again,” “also,” “in addition,” “both... and...,” etc.

又 象形。甲骨文像右手形。

甲 𠂔 金 𠂔 篆 𠂔

又及 yòují P.S.; postscript  
又... 又... yòu... yòu... both... and...

又名 yòumíng a.k.a.; alternative name

口

kǒu  
mouth; entrance



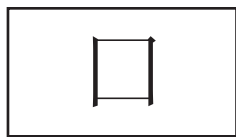
PICTOGRAPH The character 口 looks like an open mouth. Characters with the mouth radical are often associated with the movement of the mouth, e.g., 吃 (chī, to eat), 喝 (hē, to drink), 唱 (chàng, to sing), and 叫 (jiào, to shout).

口 象形。像人口形狀。

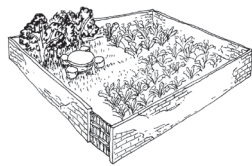
甲 𠂔 金 𠂔 篆 𠂔

口紅 kǒuhóng lipstick  
門口 ménkǒu doorway

口語 kǒuyǔ spoken language; vernacular language  
人口 rénkǒu population



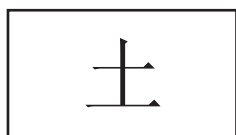
wéi  
enclose



PICTOGRAPH 囗 represents the periphery or border of an area. Characters relating to boundaries often include the radical 囗, such as 國/国 (guó, country; state), 園/园 (yuán, garden; park), 圖/图 (tú, map). Note that 囗 is larger than the radical 口 (kǒu, mouth), indicating a large area that can contain many objects.

囗 象形。像環圍形。從囗的字多有外圍或邊界。

篆 囗



tǔ  
earth; soil



PICTOGRAPH In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the upper part of 土 represents a small hill or mound of soil, while the bottom line stands for the ground. In Regular Script, a cross replaces the mound.

土 象形。像一土塊狀，下方“一”字意指大地。

甲 土 金 土 篆 土

土地 tǔdì land; soil  
土氣 tǔqì rustic; unsophisticated

國土 guótǔ country's territory; national land  
土豆 tǔdòu potato



xī  
sunset; evening



PICTOGRAPH In its ancient forms, the character 夕 resembles a half moon, meaning “sunset,” “dusk,” “evening,” or “night.” Sometimes the moon can be seen rising from the east at dusk.

夕 象形。像半個月亮，傍晚或夜晚之意。

甲 夕 金 夕 篆 夕

夕陽 xīyáng sunset; the setting sun  
除夕 chūxī lunar New Year's Eve

前夕 qiánxī eve; the day before  
朝夕 zhāoxī morning and night; all the time

# 大

dà  
big; great



PICTOGRAPH In the ancient writing systems, the character 大 portrays a figure standing with arms stretching out and legs spread apart. This posture seems to suggest that humans are the greatest creatures on earth. The primary meanings of 大 are “big,” “large,” “great,” “age,” and “older.”

大 象形。像正面人形。天地萬物中以人為大為貴，故用人形來表示大。

甲 𠂇 金 大 篆 大

大人 dàren adult; grown-up  
大家 dàjiā all; everyone

大學 dàxué college; university  
長大 zhǎngdà grow up

# 女

nǚ  
female;  
woman



PICTOGRAPH In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the character 女 depicts a woman kneeling with her arms lowered and hands clasped on her lap, reflecting the lower social status of women in ancient times. In later forms, the kneeling component is transformed as women are recognized as having a status more equal to men. The Regular Script forms of 女 and 大 are similar, but 女 emphasizes the female bosom.

女 象形。甲骨文像女子俯首，雙臂交叉下跪形。

甲 𡚰 金 𡚰 金 𡚰

女人 nǚrén woman  
女生 nǚshēng female student; girl

女兒 nǚ'ér daughter  
女士 nǚshì lady; madam

# 子

zǐ  
baby; child



PICTOGRAPH In its ancient form, the character 子 shows a baby swaddled in cloth, with its head sticking up and arms stretching out. In Regular Script, the head of the baby is represented by a horizontal hook instead of a round shape. 子 is used as suffix after some nouns, such as 桌子, 椅子 etc.

子 象形。像頭部突出、手臂在外、裹在襁褓中的嬰兒。

甲 𠂇 金 子 篆 子

孩子 háizi child  
房子 fángzi house; building

兒子 érzi son  
餃子 jiǎozi dumpling; pot-sticker

寸

cùn  
inch

**EXPLICIT CHARACTER** In Seal Script, 寸 combines 又 with 一. 又 means “right hand” while 一 indicates the section of the forearm one inch from the wrist, where a traditional Chinese doctor would feel a patient’s pulse and diagnose ailments.

寸 指事。從又，從一。“又”為右手，“一”指手後一寸之處。中醫所言寸口。

篆 寸

尺寸 chǐcùn size; dimension; measurement 寸口 cùnkǒu a person’s pulse on the wrist  
寸步難行 cùn bù nán xíng unable to move a single step (idiom)

小

xiǎo  
small

**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 小 consists of three dots, like three tiny grains of sand. In its later forms, 小 resembles a knife (represented by the vertical hook in the middle) cutting something into two smaller pieces.

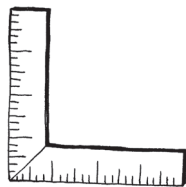
小 會意。甲骨文及金文作三點，像細小的沙粒形，表示微小的意思。

甲 小 金 小 篆 小

小孩兒 xiǎoháir child; kid; kiddo  
小時候 xiǎo shíhòu in one’s childhood

小學 xiǎoxué elementary/primary school  
小姐 xiǎojiě Miss; young lady

工

gōng  
tool; work; labor

**PICTOGRAPH** In the ancient writing systems, the character 工 looks like a carpenter’s square or ruler. The original meaning of 工 was “tool,” from which derived the meanings “work,” “labor,” “skill,” “craftsmanship,” and “construction project.”

工 象形。像工匠用的曲尺。

甲 工 金 工 篆 工

工具 gōngjù tool  
工作 gōngzuò to work; job

工人 gōngrén worker  
工程 gōngchéng engineering; engineering project

么

yāo  
tiny; small



PICTOGRAPH In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 么 represents a wisp of silk. Since a wisp is a small quantity, 么 extends to mean “small,” “tiny,” or “youngest.”

么 象形。像一小把細絲。甲骨文么、糸(mi)、絲为同源字。糸、絲都像絲束形，不同的是糸為一束絲，絲為兩束絲。系(xi)字在甲骨文中為一隻手握兩束絲。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

么 yāo one (spoken form when spelling out numbers, esp. on telephone)  
老么 lǎoyāo youngest

弓

gōng  
bow



PICTOGRAPH In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the character 弓 resembles an entire bow. In the Bronze Inscription form, 弓 depicts a bow without its string, which is how a bow should be stored. Just like human beings, bows need time for relaxation!

弓 象形。甲骨文像有弓弦弓背的完整弓形。金文簡化。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 弓

弓箭 gōngjiàn bow and arrow

彈弓 dàn'gōng catapult; slingshot

心

xīn  
heart



PICTOGRAPH In its ancient forms, the character 心 represents a heart. There are two forms of the heart radical, 心 and 忄. 心 is usually positioned at the bottom of a character as in 想(xiǎng, to think) and 愁(chóu, to worry), while 忄 is on the left, as in 忙(máng, busy) and 怕(pà, fear). Characters with heart radicals are often associated with feelings or other mental activities.

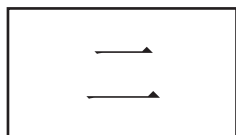
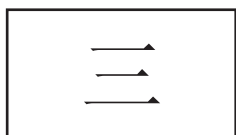
心 象形。像人的心臟。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

心理 xīnlǐ psychology; mentality  
擔心 dānxīn worry; to be anxious

關心 guānxīn care for; be concerned with  
心情 xīnqíng mood; state of mind

## NUMERALS

yī  
oneèr  
twosān  
three

**EXPLICIT CHARACTERS** In Chinese writing systems, one horizontal stroke represents the number one, two horizontal strokes stand for the number two, and three strokes for the number three. 一, 二, 三 are probably the easiest Chinese characters to remember. From ancient times until now, these three characters have not changed much.

There is a Chinese joke about a silly boy who began to learn numerals. After the boy learned 一, 二, 三 from his teacher, he told his father he was able to write any number. His father was very proud. One day he asked his son to write the number “ten thousand” to show his guests. The boy remained worked for half a day, but was still unable to finish the task. When the guests saw what he wrote, they all laughed. On the paper were thousands of horizontal strokes! In fact, numbers larger than three are expressed in a different pattern.

一 二 三 指事。以一至三画表示數字一到三，是原始的計數符號。



甲 一 金 一 篆 一

一直 yìzhí straight forward; continuously; always

一點兒 yīdiǎnr a little; a bit

甲 二 金 二 篆 二

二胡 èrhú two-stringed Chinese instrument

二百五 èrbǎi wǔ idiot; stupid person

甲 三 金 三 篆 三

三角 sānjiǎo triangle

三明治 sānmíngzhì sandwich

sì  
four

**PHONETIC LOAN CHARACTER** In the Bronze Inscriptions, the character 四 resembles a big nose, or nostrils on a face. Therefore it originally meant “gasp” or “pant.” Later 四 came to mean the numeral “four.” In the Oracle-Bone inscriptions, “four” was represented by four horizontal lines, but this character was replaced by 四.

四 假借。在甲骨文中是四橫。金文“四”像臉部的口鼻。本義為喘息，是呿的本字，因讀音相近而借用為四字。

甲 三 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

四方 sīfāng the four directions; all sides 四季 sìjì four seasons

四面八方 sìmiàn bāfāng in all directions; all around; far and near



五

wǔ  
five



EXPLICIT CHARACTER In the Neolithic signs around 4,000 B.C., the symbol “X” was used to indicate “five.” In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, a line was added above and below the X. In Regular Script, the middle part of 五 resembles a cross that corners at its right end.

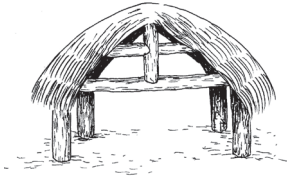
五指事。在西安半坡仰韶文化遺址出土的陶器上，X即五。甲骨文、金文在X上下各加一橫。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

五官 wǔguān five sense organs (nose, eyes, lips, tongue, ears 鼻目口舌耳); facial features  
五行 wǔxíng five elements of Chinese philosophy (wood, fire, earth, metal, water 木火土金水)

六

liù  
six



PHONETIC LOAN CHARACTER In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 六 outlines a hut or shed, possibly some sort of prehistoric dwelling. Later, 六 came to indicate the number six. In Regular Script, 六 still resembles a simple house, with the roof on top and two pillars beneath.

六 假借。在甲骨文、金文中為茅棚狀，本義為廬。由於讀音相近的關係，借用為六字。

甲 宀 金 宀 篆 宀

六百 liùbǎi six hundred  
六千 liùqiān 6,000

六萬 liùwàn 60,000  
六億 liùyì 600,000,000

七

qī  
seven



EXPLICIT CHARACTER In the Neolithic, Oracle-Bone, and Bronze Inscriptions, 十 represented the number seven. However, in Seal Script, 十 was used to mean “ten” and the vertical line of 十 was bent to mean “seven.” In Regular Script, you may still see similarities between 十 (shí, ten) and 七 (qī, seven), as 七 looks like 十 with a tail.

七 指事。在半坡陶器上以及甲骨文、金文中，十的意思皆是七。小篆將十的意思改為十，而將十的一豎彎曲，另造七字，以區別于十。

甲 十 金 十 篆 𠄎

十七 shíqī seventeen 七嘴八舌 qīzuǐ bāshé “With seven mouths and eight tongues;”  
七十 qīshí seventy lively discussion with many talking at once



bā  
eight



PHONETIC LOAN CHARACTER The character 八 suggests is the act of dividing something into parts. Originally the character did mean “to divide” or “to separate.” Later 八 came to mean the numeral eight.

八 假借。甲骨文中用兩劃來表示將一物分開，是分字的初文，後借用為數字。

甲 𠄎 金 儿 篆 八

十八 shíbā eighteen  
八十 bāshí eighty

第八 dìbā eighth  
八百 bābǎi eight hundred



jiǔ  
nine



PHONETIC LOAN CHARACTER In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 九 looks like the posterior of an animal with a long tail, possibly a monkey. Hence, the original meaning of 九 was “behind” or “buttocks.” Later 九 came to mean the number nine.

九 假借。甲骨文像是獸類臀部上長出的尾巴，是尻（kāo 屁股）的初文。後借為數目字。

甲 𠄎 金 之 篆 九

第九 dǐjiǔ ninth  
十九 shíjiǔ nineteen

九十 jiǔshí ninety  
九月 jiǔyuè September



shí  
ten



EXPLICIT CHARACTER In the Neolithic signs, as well as in the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, one vertical line stood for ten, two lines for twenty and three for thirty. In the Bronze Inscriptions, a circular dot was added in the middle of the vertical line. Later, in Seal Script, this dot became a horizontal line, making the character for “ten” look like a cross.

十 指事。在半坡陶器上，十字為一豎畫，甲骨文同。金文中間加一點，篆文又由一點延長為一橫。一說在一根繩上打一個結表示一個十。

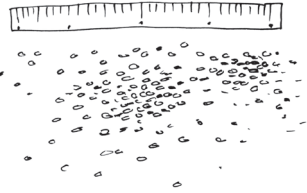
甲 丨 金 十 篆 十

十分 shífēn very; extremely  
十全十美 shíquán shíměi perfect in every way

十字架 shízì jià cross; crucifix  
十字路口 shízì lùkǒu crossroads; intersection

百

bǎi  
hundred



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the upper part of 百 may represent a ruler and the lower part a grain of white rice 白, suggesting a long line of rice grains. Meanings of 百 are “hundred,” “numerous,” and “all kinds of.”

百 會意。一說甲骨文字形上像一把尺子，下像白米粒，表示擺下一尺長的米粒，引申為一百。白，象形。像一粒白米

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

幾百 jǐbǎi several hundred; how many hundred  
百貨公司 bǎihuò gōngsī department store

百姓 bǎixìng ordinary people  
二百 èrbǎi two hundred

千

qiān  
thousand



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND In its ancient forms, the top part of 千 is a person 人 and the bottom part a ten 十, implying that the maximal life span of ten persons is 1000 years. The primary meaning of 千 is “thousand” and its extended meanings are “many,” “numerous,” etc.

千 會意。甲骨文從十，從人。人壽以一百歲為限，十人壽限加起便是千。本義為千，引申義為很多、無數。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

千萬 qiānwàn ten million; millions and millions; to be sure  
成千上萬 chéngqiān shàngwàn thousands upon thousands

## Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches

In addition to these numerals, the Chinese also traditionally used two sets of numbers to count up to sixty: ten heavenly stems and twelve earthly branches. Together, they were used to count years, months, days, and hours. Today, the heavenly stems still often appear as ordinal numbers, choices in multiple choice questions, or as abbreviations of parties in legal documents (Party A, Party B, etc.). Many also commonly appear as components in more complex characters.

### TEN HEAVENLY STEMS

甲	乙	丙	丁	戊	己	庚	辛	壬	癸
jiǎ	yǐ	bǐng	dīng	wù	jǐ	gēng	xīn	rén	guǐ

### TWELVE EARTHLY BRANCHES

子	丑	寅	卯	辰	巳	午	未	申	酉	戌	亥
zǐ	chǒu	yín	mǎo	chén	sì	wǔ	wèi	shēn	yǒu	xū	hài

# CHARACTERS *by* PINYIN

## (A-Z)

### KEY TO SCRIPT TYPES

SYMBOL	SCRIPT	EXAMPLES (報)	SYMBOL	SCRIPT	EXAMPLES (報)
甲	Oracle-Bone Inscriptions		篆	Seal Script	
金	Bronze Inscriptions		草	Cursive Script	

See the "Types of Script" section on page vi of the Preface for more information.

**ā**  
(a prefix)

**ē**  
big mound

**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 阿 (pronounced ē) is made up of the mound radical 阝 and the phonetic element 可 (kě), originally referring to "a big mound." Its extended meanings are "riverbank," "the corner or edge," "be bent," "to pander to," "to play up to," "graceful," etc. When 阿 is pronounced ā, it functions as a prefix to a monosyllabic name or a kinship term of address to indicate familiarity. In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, 可 resembles a mouth exhaling and means "to approve," "okay," "may," "can," and "but."

**阿** 形聲。從阜(左阝)，可聲。本義為大土山，音讀作 ē。引申義有山水的彎曲之處、角落、屈從迎合、阿諛奉承等。作為人名與親屬稱謂的前綴時讀作 ā，如阿毛，阿爸、阿姨。可，從口，從丂(kǎo)。丂，氣欲舒出狀。以口中舒氣以示認可、同意等。

金 阿 篆 阿

阿姨 āyí aunt; nursemaid

阿拉伯 ālābó Arab; Arabic

**a**  
(exclamation particle)



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 啊 is used as an exclamation, and consists of the mouth radical 口 and the phonetic component 阿 (ā/ē). 阿 contains the mound radical 阝 and the phonetic 可 (kě), meaning "large mound."

**啊** 形聲。從口，阿聲。用作嘆詞。阿，形聲。金文從阜(隘坑；土山)，可聲，本義為山的彎曲處。

啊呀 āyā interjection of surprise

啊喲 āyō interjection of surprise or pain

# 哎

āi  
(exclamatory  
particle)



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 哎 combines the mouth radical 口 and the phonetic indicator 艾 (ài) and functions as an interjection to express surprise, dissatisfaction, regret, greeting, or to draw attention. 艾 is Chinese mugwort or wormwood. The dried leaves of mugwort can be made into moxa cones (a cylinder of cotton wool or other combustible material) and used in moxibustion (a traditional treatment of Chinese medicine in which moxa cones are placed on the skin and ignited in order to treat disease or produce analgesia).

哎 形聲。從口，艾聲，是後起字。用做嘆詞，表示傷感、嘆息或提醒、打招呼、呼應等。哎呀用來表示驚訝，哎喲表示驚訝、痛苦。艾，形聲。從艹，乂(yì)聲，本義指艾草，曬乾后可制成艾絨用作灸療。

哎呀 āiyā ah!; Oh, my!

哎喲 āiyō ouch; whoops

# 愛 / 爱

ài  
love; to love



ASSOCIATIVE AND PICTOPHONETIC COMPOUND In the Seal Script, the top part of 愛 is both the phonetic and signifying component (pronounced ài, meaning “love”) and the bottom part is the signifying element (夂 suī, walk back and forth; hover). It seems a man is falling deeply in love with a woman, hovering around her house and being reluctant to leave. The simplified character 爱 derives from the cursive style of the traditional form 愛.

愛 會意兼形聲。篆文上部標聲兼表意(ài, love), 下部從夂(suī 腳), 表示心有所愛而腳下徘徊不忍離去, 有慈愛、情愛、喜愛等意。爱是愛字的草書楷化字, 去掉愛字中間的心字而將夂字改為友。

篆 愛 草 爱

愛人 àirén spouse (PRC); lover (non-PRC)  
可愛 kě'ài cute; lovely

愛好 àihào hobby  
親愛的 qīn'àide dear; beloved; darling

# 安

ān  
calm; safe



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND The character 安 consists of the roof radical 宀 on top and the woman 女 underneath, suggesting when there is no war or natural calamity, women can stay home peacefully and life is safe and tranquil. Hence, 安 means “tranquil,” “peaceful,” “quiet,” “calm,” “stable,” “safe,” “secure,” “at ease,” “content,” “satisfied,” “to pacify,” “to stabilize,” “to settle down,” and “to install.”

安 會意。從女，從宀，表示一女在房中。本義為安靜、安寧，引申義有安定、安全、舒適、感到滿足、使安定、安置、安裝等。

甲 安 金 安 篆 安

安靜 ānjìng quiet  
安心 ānxīn to feel at ease

平安 píngān safe and sound  
晚安 wǎn'ān Good night!

# 把

**bǎ**  
(MW for objects  
with handles)



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 把 is made up of the hand radical 扌 and the phonetic element 巴, meaning “to grasp,” “to hold,” “to take hold of,” “a handle,” or “handful.” 把 can be used as a measure word for objects that can be held or handled with one hand. It also functions as a particle before a direct object, followed by a transitive verb. In Seal Script 把 looks like a snake with a large mouth. The original meaning of 巴 was “snake.” Later it came to mean “to cling to” or “to stick to,” for when a snake moves, its body always clings to something.

**把** 形聲。從扌，巴聲。本義為以手握持。引申義有把守控制、東西的柄，也用於能以一手所握的東西（一把米），以及能以一隻手握持的一些東西的量詞（一把刀）。另外，把也作為介詞引出動作受事的對象，使賓語前置。巴，象形。篆文像一條張著大嘴的蛇。

篆 𠄎 巴 篆 𠄎

把手 bǎshǒu knob  
一把刀 yībǎ dāo a knife

火把 huǒbǎ torch  
一把椅子 yībǎ yǐzi a chair

# 爸

**bà**  
father; dad



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 爸 is made up of the radical 父 (fù, father) and the phonetic 巴 (bā, cling to). In its ancient form, 父 delineates a hand holding a stone ax—an important tool and weapon in primitive society. In Seal Script 巴 looks like a snake with a large mouth.

**爸** 形聲。從父、巴聲。父，象形。甲骨文、金文字形像手持石斧工作狀。巴，象形。篆文中像一條張著大嘴的蛇。本義為蛇，引申為依附、靠近、巴結等。

父 甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎 巴 篆 𠄎

爸爸 bàba (informal) father  
親爸 qīnbà biological father

爸媽 bànmā dad and mom  
阿爸 ābà (dialect) father

# 吧

**ba**  
(sentence-  
ending particle)



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** 吧 has the mouth radical 口 and the phonetic element 巴 (bā). 吧 can be used as a question indicator, onomatopoeic word, or particle for making a suggestion. In Seal Script, 吧 resembles a snake with a large, open mouth. Today's meanings of 吧 are still related to the characteristics of a snake, such as “cling to,” “stick to,” and “wait anxiously” (as a snake waiting for prey).

**吧** 象聲詞、語氣詞。巴，象形。篆文像嘴大能吞象的蛇形。本義為蛇，引申為依附、靠近、巴結等。

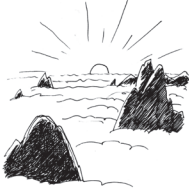
吧 篆 𠄎

好吧 hǎoba alright; fine  
酒吧 jiǔbā bar; pub

走吧 zǒuba let's go  
網吧 wǎngbā Internet café

# 白

**bái**  
white; (surname)



**PICTOGRAPH** In its ancient form, 白 resembles bright rays spreading out from the sun, or as some scholars say, a grain of white rice. The original meaning of 白 is “white.” Extended meanings include “pure,” “clear,” and “in vain.”

**白** 象形。像太陽初升、光芒四射狀。一說像一粒白米。

甲 𠄎 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

白天 **báitiān** daytime; day  
白人 **báirén** white people; caucasian

白色 **báisè** white color  
白菜 **báicài** Chinese cabbage; bok choy

# 班

**bān**  
class



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In its ancient forms, the character 班 looks like two pieces of jade with a knife in between. The original meaning of 班 was “to divide a jade stone into two,” from which the meanings “to distribute,” “class,” “group,” “work shift,” and “schedule (of flights, bus, etc.)” have derived.

**班** 會意。金文中間是刀，左右為兩塊玉（玨），指以刀將玉一分為二。本義為分割玉石，引申為分工作或學習的班組，按時間分成的工作時段，定時開行的班車、航班等。

金 班 篆 班

三班 **sānbān** Class Three  
上班 **shàngbān** to go to work

中文班 **zhōngwén bān** Chinese class  
班機 **bānjī** a scheduled flight

# 搬

**bān**  
to move



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 搬 consists of the hand radical 扌 and the phonetic element 般 (bān), meaning “to move,” “to take away,” or “to copy mechanically.” 般 is made up of 舟 (zhōu, boat) and 殸 (shū, a type of ancient weapon made of bamboo), suggesting the act of using a boat-pole to change the direction a boat is taking. Originally 般 meant “to rotate,” and has been borrowed to mean “sort,” “type,” or “the same as.” In its ancient forms, 舟 is the pictograph of a boat and 殸 a hand holding a weapon.

**搬** 形聲。從扌，般聲。意指搬動、搬運，引申義有套用等。般，會意。從舟，從殸，本義為用篙使舟旋轉，後借指樣、種、相同。舟，象形，古文字中像船形。殸 (shū)，會意。古文字中像手持一兵器，本義為古代一種竹製的兵器。如今不單用，只作為偏旁。

篆 𠄎 舟 甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

搬家 **bān jiā** to resettle, to move (house)  
搬運 **bānyùn** to transport; to carry

搬桌子 **bān zhuōzi** to move a table  
搬運工 **bānyùngōng** porter

# 半

bàn  
half



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In its ancient form, the character 半 consists of 八 (bā, divide; eight) and 牛 (niú, ox), indicating cutting an ox in half. In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the character 牛 depicts the front view of an ox's head. In the character 半 in Regular Script, 八 is upside down and 牛 loses one stroke on the left.

**半** 會意。上從八（分開），下從牛。表示將牛從中切為兩半，意為事物的二分之一。

金 半 篆 半

半天 bàntiān half a day  
半個月 bàngèyuè half a month

半年 bànnián half a year  
一半 yībàn half

# 拌

bàn  
to mix

**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 拌 consists of the hand radical 扌 and the phonetic element 半 (bàn), indicating the act of mixing things with hands. Literally 拌嘴 (bànzuǐ) is “to mix mouths” and therefore means “to wrangle” or “to quarrel.” In its ancient forms, 半 (bàn, half) contains 八 (bā, divide; eight) on top and 牛 (niú, ox) underneath, indicating cutting an ox into halves. In the character 半 in Regular Script, 八 is upside down and 牛 loses one stroke on the left.

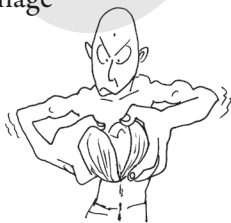
**拌** 形聲。從手，半聲。是後起字。本義為攪拌、攪和，引申義有爭吵等。半，會意。金文、篆文上從八（分開），下從牛。表示將牛從中切為兩半，意為事物的二分之一。

涼拌面 liángbàn miàn cold noodles with sauce  
拌嘴 bànzuǐ to quarrel

涼拌菜 liángbàn cài salad  
攪拌 jiǎobàn to stir; to agitate

# 辦/办

bàn  
to manage



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 辦 consists of the signifying element 力 (lì, power) and the phonetic element 辨 (biàn, to debate), meaning “handle,” “manage,” “do,” or “punish.” You can memorize this character by imagining a person “managing” to split something in two using all their strength. 辨 is made up of two 辛 (xīn). In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, 辛 is a pictograph of a chiseled instrument used to tattoo the faces of prisoners. Extended meanings of 辛 are “pungent,” “laborious,” “suffering,” and “hot (in flavor).” The simplified character 办 uses two short strokes to replace the two 辛 of the traditional form 辦.

**辦** 形聲。從力，辨 (biàn 剖分、爭辯) 聲。辛，象形。甲骨文、金文像在犯人臉上刺字的刑具。簡體字办用一撇一點代替兩個辛字，舊時已見。

篆 辦 辛 甲 力 金 辛 篆 辛

辦公 bàngōng to work (esp. in an office)  
辦法 bànfǎ means; method

辦公室 bàngōngshì office  
怎麼辦 zěnmébàn what's to be done?



# 幫 / 帮

bāng  
to help



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 幫 consists of the signifying element 帛 (bó, silk) and the phonetic 封 (fēng, seal). The original meaning of 幫 was “the upper part of a shoe” while extended meanings include “side” (of a boat, cart, etc.), “assist,” and “help.” The character 帛 combines 白 (bái, white) and 巾 (jīn, pictograph of a scarf), referring to un-dyed silk. In Regular Script, 封 is comprised of two 土 (tǔ, soil) and one 寸 (cùn, inch). 幫 is a variant of 幫, and the middle part 白 was deleted from 幫 to form the simplified 帮.

**幫** 形聲。從帛，封聲。本義為鞋幫，引申為輔助等意。封，會意。甲骨文像在土堆上植樹，以此來劃定邊界。帛，從巾，從白；本義指素白絲織物，引申為絲織品的總稱。巾，象形。像垂下的佩巾。繁體字幫的另一寫法是幫。簡體字帮去掉了幫字中間的白字。

幫助 bāngzhù to help; aid  
幫手 bāngshǒu helper

幫忙 bāngmáng to help; to do a favor  
幫派 bāngpài faction

# 棒

bàng  
fantastic; stick



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 棒 is comprised of the wood radical 木 and the phonetic 奉 (fèng), originally meaning “a stick” or “a club.” The extended meanings of 棒 are “to hit with a stick,” “strong,” “capable,” and “excellent.” In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, 奉 looks like two hands holding a plant. Its original meaning is “to hold in both hands respectfully,” from which it has derived the meanings “to offer with respect,” “to esteem,” “to serve,” “to believe in,” etc.

**棒** 形聲。從木，奉聲。本義為棍子，引申義有健壯、能力強、水平高等。奉，會意。甲骨文像雙手恭敬地捧著一物。本義為捧，是捧的本字。引申義有奉上、尊崇、信仰、侍侯等。

篆 梃 奉 甲 木 金 弄 篆 棒

棒子 bàngzi stick; club  
冰棒 bīngbàng popsicle

棒球 bàngqiú baseball  
真棒 zhēnbàng excellent (interjection)

# 包

bāo  
bag; sack;  
bundle;  
package



**PICTOGRAPH** In its ancient forms, 包 looks like a fetus in its mother's womb. Originally 包 referred to “afterbirth,” from which it has derived the meanings “to wrap,” “to surround,” “to contain,” “to contract,” “to charter,” “to guarantee,” “package,” “bundle,” “bag,” “lump,” etc. 包 also serves as a measure word for things in the shape of a bale, a box, a bundle, a package, a packet, or a sack, as in “一包衣服 (a bundle of clothes),” and “兩包米 (two sacks of rice).”

**包** 象形。甲骨文像腹中有孕狀，本義為胎衣，引申為把東西包起、包圍、包含、全部承擔、擔保、袋子、包裹、像包的東西、包裹起來的東西、腫起的疙瘩，也可以作為量詞（一包衣服|兩包米）。

甲 篆 篆

包餃子 bāo jiǎozi to make dumplings  
錢包 qiánbāo wallet; purse

麵包 miànbāo bread  
書包 shūbāo schoolbag; satchel

# 保

**bǎo**  
to protect;  
insurance



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the character 保 depicts a person carrying a child on his/her back. Its original meaning was “to carry somebody/something on one’s back,” from which the Chinese have derived the meanings “to bring up,” “to safeguard,” “to protect,” “to defend,” “to maintain,” “to guarantee,” “to insure,” etc. In Seal Script, 保 becomes the combination of the person radical 亻 and 呆 (dāi, dull; slow-witted; wooden), possibly because a dull-witted child needs more protection.

**保** 會意。甲骨文從人，從子，像人負子於背。本義為背在背上，引申義有養育、保護、保持、保證等。

甲 保 金 保 篆 保

保姆 bǎomǔ nanny

保安 bǎoān to ensure safety; security guard

保險 bǎoxiǎn insurance

保重 bǎozhòng to take care of oneself

# 抱

**bào**  
to hold or carry  
in one’s arms



**ASSOCIATIVE AND PICTOPHONIC COMPOUND** The character 抱 consists of the hand radical 扌 and the phonetic and signifying component 包 (bāo, wrap), signifying the act of holding or carrying something in one’s arms. Its extended meanings include “to hug,” “to embrace,” “to surround,” “to harbor,” “to adopt,” etc. 包 is also used in the character 跑.

**抱** 會意兼形聲。從扌，從包，包亦聲。本義為以手抱持，引申義有擁抱、圍繞、胸中懷有等。跑字也以包為聲旁。

篆 揮 抱

抱孩子 bàoháizi to hold a baby in one’s arms

抱歉 bàoqiàn to feel apologetic

擁抱 yōngbào to hug

抱著 bàozhe keep holding

# 報/報

**bào**  
to report;  
newspaper



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 報 depicts a hand pressing the head of a handcuffed person, forcing him or her onto his or her knees, signifying that the prisoner will be executed. The original meaning of 報 was “to pass a sentence on someone who is guilty of a crime.” Since a judge needs to report the conviction to the appropriate authorities and make it public, 報 extended to mean “to report,” “to announce,” and “newspaper.” The simplified character 报 is developed from the cursive style of 報, with the hand radical 扌 replacing 幸.

**報** 會意。甲骨文、金文中像一隻手從後按住一個像帶手銬跪著的人，表示行將處決犯人。報的本義是判決犯人。因這類事情要通報，引申為報告、報刊、回報等。簡體字报是繁體字報的草書楷化字，左邊以扌替換幸字。

甲 報 金 報 篆 報 草 報

報告 bàogào report; paper

日報 rìbào daily newspaper

報紙 bàozhǐ newspaper

海報 hǎibào poster

# 杯

bēi  
cup; glass



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER 杯 consists of the wood radical 木 and the phonetic element 不 (bù), which may have referred to a wooden cup.

杯 形聲。從木，不聲，意為裝飲料的器皿或指木做的杯子。

篆 𠂔

杯子 bēizi cup; glass  
一杯茶 yībēichá a cup of tea

茶杯 chábēi teacup  
乾杯 gānbēi bottoms up; to drink a toast; cheers

# 北

běi  
north



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the character 北 depicts two people standing back-to-back, meaning “contrary,” “deviate from,” or “back.” Since traditional Chinese houses usually face south (with their backs toward the north), 北 means “north.”

北 會意。甲骨文中像二人背對背站着，本義為違背，引申為脊背。後來加肉月旁作“背”，表示脊背之義，而“北”則借用為方位名詞。

甲 𠂔 金 𠂔 篆 𠂔

北京 Běijīng Beijing  
東北 dōngběi northeast

北邊 běibiān north side; northern part  
西北 xīběi northwest

# 被

bèi  
by; quilt



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 被 consists of the clothes radical 衤 and the phonetic element 皮 (pí). The original meaning of 被 is “quilt,” and has been extended to mean “to cover,” “to suffer from,” and “by (an indicator of passive voice).” In Bronze Inscriptions, 皮 looks like a hand stripping the skin off an animal, meaning “skin,” “fur,” “leather,” “surface,” etc.

被 形聲。從衤，皮聲。本義為被子，引申義有覆蓋、遭受、表示被動等。皮，會意。金文下像手，上像獸形，表示以手剝去獸皮。本義為剝皮，引申為獸皮、皮膚、皮制的（皮包、皮鞋、皮帶）、表面的等。

篆 𠂔 皮 甲 𠂔 金 𠂔 篆 𠂔

被子 bèizi quilt  
被動 bèidòng passive

被單 bèidān bed sheet  
被告 bèigào defendant

# 備 / 备

bèi  
to prepare



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 備 looks like an arrow in the quiver, signaling ready for a battle. Hence, the meanings of 備 are “cautious,” “prepare,” or “ready.” 脩 is a variant form of 備, and the simplified character 备 remains only the right part of 脩.

備 會意。甲骨文、金文皆像箭在箭匣中，意指準備、防備、預備、裝備等。脩是備字的異體字，簡體字备去掉了脩字的部首亻。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 脩

準備 zhǔnbèi preparation; to prepare  
設備 shèbèi equipment; facilities

預備 yùbèi to prepare; to make ready  
具備 jùbèi possess; to have

# 本

běn  
(MW for books);  
foundation



EXPLICIT CHARACTER The character 本 represents a tree 木 with a horizontal line added at the bottom. Its original meaning is “the root of a tree,” from which its present meanings “foundation,” “basis,” “based on,” “source,” “origin,” “original,” “capital (in business),” and “oneself” have been derived. 本 also functions as a measure word for books, periodicals, etc.

本 指事。木字下面加一橫，本義是樹根。引申為基礎、根源、原來的、自身的、本錢、書本雜誌的量詞等。

金 𣎵 篆 本

本人 běnrén oneself  
本來 běnlái originally

本地 běndì local  
課本 kèběn textbook

# 鼻

bí  
nose

ASSOCIATIVE AND PICTOPHONIC COMPOUND The character 鼻 is made up of the signifying part 自 and the phonetic element 畀 (bì), indicating the “nose” that breathes air. In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, 自 shows the shape of a nose, referring to “nose” in the first place, and later is borrowed to mean “self,” “one’s own,” “from,” or “since.” Now 自 does not mean “nose” anymore since the character 鼻 is used instead. In its ancient forms 畀 looks like someone holding a container with both hands and means “to give” or “to confer upon.”

鼻 會意兼形聲。篆文從自（鼻子），畀（bì，給與）聲，表示用鼻子吸氣。自，象形。甲骨文像鼻形。自的本義是鼻子，因後來引申用作為自己，而用鼻字來表示鼻子的意思。

篆 鼻 自 甲 自 金 畀 篆 自

鼻子 bízi nose  
鼻音 bíyīn nasal sound/tone

鼻孔 bíkǒng nostril  
鼻頭 bítóu the tip of the nose

# 比

bǐ  
to compare



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND The ancient form of 比 depicts two people standing side by side, meaning “to juxtapose.” The extended meanings of 比 include “close together,” “next to,” “to cling to,” “to compare,” “to compete,” “to model after,” “than,” etc. Can you tell what the differences are between the left and right part of 比?

**比** 會意。古文的比字像靠在一起的兩個人。本義為並列，引申為靠近、比較、對比、模仿等。

甲 𠄎 𠄎 金 𠄎 𠄎 篆 𠄎 𠄎

比較 bǐjiào to compare; relatively  
比賽 bǐsài competition; match

比如 bǐrú for example; proportion  
三比二 sān bǐ èr three to two

# 筆/笔

bǐ  
pen;  
writing brush



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, 聿 (yù) shows a hand holding a brush. You can see 聿 in the character 書 (shū, book); 畫 (huà, to paint; painting) and 律 (lǜ, law). The character 筆 combines the bamboo radical 𦏧 and 聿, signifying a writing brush or writing instrument. The simplified character 笔 combines the bamboo radical and the character 毛 (máo, hair; fur) since the nib of a Chinese brush is made of animal fur and bamboo shafts.

**筆** 會意。從聿（手持筆形），從竹，指手握竹子做的筆杆寫字。簡體筆字保留上邊竹字頭，因毛筆筆端用獸毛之故，下邊改用毛字。屬新創的會意字。

篆 𦏧

毛筆 máobǐ writing brush  
筆試 bǐshì written examination

圓珠筆 yuánzhūbǐ ballpoint pen  
筆畫 bǐhuà strokes of a Chinese character

# 幣/币

bì  
currency; coin



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 幣 consists of the scarf radical 巾 (jīn) and the phonetic indicator 敝 (bì), originally referring to “silk fabric used as a present.” 幣 has extended to mean “a present,” “money,” “coin,” and “currency.” In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the left part of 敝 depicts a piece of broken cloth with four big holes and the right part the tap/rap radical 攴, meaning “shabby,” “tattered,” and “worn out.” 巾 looks like a piece of hanging cloth, meaning “scarf,” “towel,” or “napkin.” In the simplified 币, a left falling stroke replaces 敝 in 幣.

**幣** 形聲。從巾，敝聲。本義指作為禮物的絲織品，引申為禮物、財物、錢幣。敝，會意。左邊像衣物有洞，右邊手持棍拍打，本義為衣服破爛，引申為破舊、衰敗等。巾，象形。像佩巾下垂形。簡化字币用一撇代替繁體字幣上部的敝字。

篆 幣

貨幣 huòbì money; currency  
人民幣 rénmínbì PRC Currency (RMB)

外幣 wàibì foreign currency  
紙幣 zhǐbì paper currency

# 邊/边

**biān**  
side



ASSOCIATIVE AND PICTOPHONETIC COMPOUND 邊 is comprised of the walk radical 辵 and the signifying and phonetic element 鼻 (biān, side), meaning “side,” “edge,” “border,” or “next.” In the Bronze Inscriptions, 鼻 combines 自 (zì, nose; oneself) with 旁 (páng, side), referring to the sides of a nose. In Regular Script, 鼻 is the combination of 自, 穴 (xuè, cave), and 方 (fāng, square). In the simplified character 边, 力 replaces 鼻.

邊 會意兼形聲。從辵，鼻 (biān) 聲。鼻，會意。從自，從旁，金文像鼻的兩翼。自，象形。像鼻形，本義為鼻子，後引申為自己。簡體字边用力替代鼻，屬符號替代字。元明時已有边字。

金 鼻 篆 邊

上邊 shàngbian above; on top of  
前邊 qiánbian in front

下邊 xiàbian below; under  
後邊 hòubian behind

# 便

**biàn**  
convenient

**pián**  
inexpensive



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND The character 便 combines the person radical 亻 with the character 更 (gēng, change), referring to the ways in which people create shortcuts to make things easier. Meanings of 便 include: “suitable,” “beneficial,” “convenient,” “informal” (biàn), and “inexpensive” (pián). In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, 更 resembles a hand holding a spatula to turn a pancake on a griddle. Hence its meanings: “change” or “alternate.”

便 會意。篆文從人、從更。人有不便時，更改方能使之安妥方便。更，會意兼形聲。甲骨文字形像手持鏟翻餅狀，引申為更改。

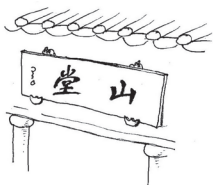
金 亻 篆 便 更 甲 金 更

方便 fāngbiàn convenient  
便利店 biànlidiàn convenience store

隨便 suíbiàn as one pleases; casual  
便宜 piányi inexpensive; cheap

# 遍

**biàn**  
(MW for actions)



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 遍 is composed of the walk radical 辵 and the phonetic indicator 扁 (biǎn, flat), signifying “to walk all over.” Its extended meanings include “everywhere,” “all over,” “throughout,” and “one time.” In the Seal Script, 扁 is the combination of 戶 (hù, household) and 冊 (cè, volume; copy) and originally meant a horizontal board bearing an inscription hanging over the door. Nowadays 扁 is used to mean “flat”. In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, 戶 is the pictograph of a single leaf door. In ancient writing systems, 冊 depicts a scroll of bamboo slips bound together.

遍 形聲。從辵 (辵)，扁聲。意為普遍、到處；也用作表示次數的量詞。扁，會意。從戶，從冊，本義為題字的匾，引申義指物體平而薄等。

篆 遍

一遍 yíbiàn one time  
普遍 pǔbiàn common; universal

遍地 biàndì everywhere; all over the place  
千遍萬遍 qiānbàn wànbàn thousands of times

# 表

**biǎo**  
surface;  
matrilineal  
relatives



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In its ancient form, the character 表 looks like a fur coat with the fur facing out, signifying “a fur coat.” Later 表 came to mean “outside,” “surface,” “appearance,” “to show,” “example,” “chart,” or “form.” In addition, 表 refers to the children of paternal aunts or maternal uncles or aunts, while 堂 (táng, [main] hall) is used for the children of paternal uncles. The original meanings of 堂 and 表 indicate that traditionally, children of paternal uncles were considered closer to the inner family and more important. In Chinese, 表親 (maternal relatives) are also called 外親 (literally “outside relatives”).

**表** 會意。篆文從衣，從毛。古代以獸皮為衣，毛皆在外，故表字本義為外衣，引申為外面、外表、表格、表率、表達、外親（表親）等。

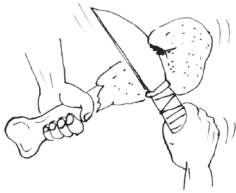
甲 𠄎 篆 𠄎

表面 biǎomiàn surface  
表姐 biǎojiě older female cousin via female line

外表 wàibiǎo appearance  
表現 biǎoxiàn behavior; performance

# 別/别

**bié**  
other; do not



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the left part of 別 represents a knife and the right part resembles bone fragments, signifying the action of separating bones from flesh. The primary meaning of 別 is “to separate” or “part.” Its extended meanings include “distinguish,” “other,” “another,” and “do not.” In the simplified character 别, the right part is the knife radical 刂, just as in the traditional version, but the left bottom part is 力, which differs slightly from the traditional character 別.

**別** 會意。甲骨文從刀，從冎(guǎ)，本義指以刀剔下骨頭上肉。另，象形，与冎本為一字，甲骨文中像剔乾淨用來占卜的牛骨。簡體字别的左下方寫作力，與繁體字別稍有不同。

甲 𠄎 篆 𠄎

別的 biéde else; other  
特別 tèbié special; especially

別人 biérén other people; others  
別字 biézi mispronounced or wrongly written character

# 冰

**bīng**  
ice



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** The character 冰 is the combination of the ice radical 冫 and water 水, signifying that ice is frozen water. 冰 can be used as a verb meaning “to cool things with ice,” “to make cold,” and as an adjective meaning “iced,” “ice-cold,” etc. In some word combinations like 冰糖 (bīngtáng, crystal sugar), 冰 stands for an ice-like substance.

**冰** 會意。從冫 (冫的意思是冰)，從水，意指水結成冰。另外可用作動詞，指使人感到寒冷或用冰使東西變涼。也可用作形容詞，指像冰一樣。

金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

冰箱 bīngxiāng fridge  
滑冰 huábing to skate; skating

冰水 bīngshuǐ iced water  
冰激凌 bīngjīlíng ice cream

# 病

**bìng**  
illness; to become ill



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 病 is made up of the sick radical 疒 (nè) and the phonetic component 丙 (bǐng, third), meaning “illness,” “ailment,” “sickness,” “disease,” “to fall ill,” “defect,” or “fault.” In Seal Script, 疒 looks like a bed for the sick. The characters with the sick radical are often associated with illnesses or unhealthy conditions, such as 癌 (ái, cancer), 痛 (tòng, ache), 瘦 (shòu, skinny), 癢 (yǎng, itchy), 瘋 (fēng, mad; crazy), etc. In ancient forms, 丙 depicts a fish tail and later was borrowed to mean “third,” or “third heavenly stem” (see page 20).

**病** 形聲。從疒，丙聲。篆文疒像是一張病床。病古代為重病，引申為疾病的統稱、缺點、毛病等。有疒字旁的字多與身體的疾病或不適有關，譬如瘡、瘋癲、瘟疫、疼痛、痰、瘦、癌、癢。丙，象形。意指魚尾，後被借用為天干的第三位，也表示順序中的第三。

篆 病

生病 shēngbìng to fall sick  
病人 bìngren patient

看病 kànbìng to go to a doctor  
毛病 máobìng shortcoming; defect

# 不

**bù**  
not; no



**PHONETIC LOAN CHARACTER** In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the horizontal stroke of the character 不 represents the ground, and the three strokes underneath signify a germinating seed. The original meaning of 不 was “seed of a plant,” but later was borrowed to mean “no” or “not.”

**不** 假借。像種子萌芽即將破土而出時的形狀，是胚的本字。後多借為否定詞，本義遂不用。

甲 𠄎 金 丩 篆 丩

不錯 búcuò not bad; pretty good  
不久 bùjiǔ before long; near future

不同 bùtóng different; not the same  
不用 búyòng need not

# 步

**bù**  
step; pace



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 步 represents two footprints, one in front of the other. Its original meaning is “to go on foot” or “to walk,” from which it has derived the meanings “step,” “pace,” “stage,” “degree,” and “situation.” In Regular Script, 步 still bears a resemblance to two footprints, one on the top and the other underneath.

**步** 會意。甲骨文、金文、篆文像左右腳一前一後行走狀。本義為用腳行走，引申為腳步、階段、地步等。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 𠄎

跑步 pǎobù to run  
散步 sànbù take a walk

進步 jìnbù progress; to progress  
同步 tóngbù to synchronize; synchronization



# 才

cái  
not until; only then



**EXPLICIT CHARACTER** The character 才 looks like a seedling just breaking through the ground. The horizontal stroke represents the ground and the part underneath is the root of the seedling. The meanings of 才 include “just,” “only,” “not until,” “ability,” “talent,” etc.

才 指事。甲骨文中一橫畫象徵土地，表示種子已生根發芽、破土而出。本義為草木初生，引申為剛剛。

甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 才

剛才 gāngcái just now; a moment ago  
口才 kǒucái eloquence

才能 cáinéng talent; ability  
天才 tiāncái genius; talented

# 菜

cài  
dish; cuisine;  
vegetable



**ASSOCIATIVE AND PICTOPHONETIC COMPOUND** The character 菜 is composed of the grass/plant radical 艹 and phonetic and signifying component 采 (cǎi), meaning “vegetable.” In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the character 采 looks like a hand picking fruits from a tree, and means “pick,” “pluck,” or “gather.” When vegetables are ripe, people will gather them.

菜 會意兼形聲。本義為蔬菜。從艸，采聲。采亦有採摘之意。采，會意。像以手採樹上果實。

篆 菜 采 甲 𠄎 金 𠄎 篆 采

青菜 qīngcài green vegetable  
點菜 diǎncài to order dishes

做菜 zuòcài to cook  
菜單 càidān menu

# 餐

cān  
meal



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 餐 consists of the radical 食 (shí, eat) and phonetic element 飠 (cān), meaning “to eat,” “food,” or “meal.” In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the lower part of 食 resembles a high-legged container full of food, while the upper part represents an open mouth, referring to the act of eating. In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the character 飠 depicts a hand next to a skeleton or bones, meaning “remnant,” “ferocious,” etc.

餐 形聲。從食，飠聲，意為吞嚥、吃飯。甲骨文中“食”字上邊像是向下張開的嘴，下邊像是盛滿了食物的容器，表示張口向下吃容器中的食物。

篆 餐

餐廳 cāntīng dining hall  
中餐 zhōngcān Chinese food

餐館 cānguǎn restaurant  
西餐 xīcān Western-style food

# 廁/厠

cè  
toilet

PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 廁 contains the radical 广 (yǎn, shed; roof; shelter) and the phonetic element 則 (zé, rule; regulation), meaning “lavatory” or “toilet.” In the Bronze Inscriptions, 則 is the combination of 鼎 (dǐng) and a knife. 鼎 is a large, three-legged bronze caldron. In ancient times, laws and regulations were often carved on 鼎. Hence, 則 means “law,” “rule,” or “regulation.” In Seal Script, 鼎 is replaced by 貝 in the character 則, but the knife part 刂 remains. 厠 is a variant of 廁, from which the simplified character 厕 has derived. 貝 is the simplified form of 貝.

廁形聲。從广（敞屋），則聲，意為廁所。則，會意。金文從鼎，從刂，因古代的法律條文曾經刻鑄在鼎上，讓人遵守，本義為規則，也用作副詞，表示轉折。因鼎、貝二字在古文中形近，篆文將則的左邊由鼎改為貝。厠是廁的俗體字，簡化字厕來源於厠。

篆 廁 則 金 鼎 甲 貝 篆 貝

廁所 cèsuǒ bathroom; toilet  
男廁 nán cè men's room

公廁 gōng cè public toilet  
女廁 nǚ cè women's room

# 查

chá  
to check; to look up

PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 查 consists of the wood radical 木 and the phonetic component 旦 (dàn), originally referring to a wooden raft. 查 has been extended to mean “to check,” “to examine,” “to investigate,” “to look into,” or “to consult (a reference book, dictionary, etc),” probably because one has to check a raft carefully before setting off on it. 旦 is composed of 日 and a horizontal stroke underneath, symbolizing the sun rising above the horizon. 旦 therefore means “daybreak” or “dawn.”

查形聲。篆文從木，旦聲。楷書從木，旦聲。本義一說是木筏，一說為砍剩的木樁。引申義有檢查、調查、翻檢（查字典，查資料等）。旦，指事。一代表地平綫，表示太陽剛從地平綫上升起，本義為日出天亮時。

篆 查

檢查 jiǎnchá to check; to inspect  
調查 diào chá to investigate

查問 chá wèn to interrogate  
查字典 chá zì diǎn to consult a dictionary

# 茶

chá  
tea



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER In Seal Script, the character 茶 consists of 艸 (the grass or herb radical), and the phonetic element 余 (yú), meaning tea. In Regular Script, 茶 contains 艸 (grass radical), 人 (rén, man; person), and 木 (mù, wood; tree), resembling a person harvesting tea leaves.

茶形聲。茶与茶本為一字，從艸，余聲，本義為一種苦菜。唐代時將“茶”減去一筆而成為“茶”。

篆 茶

茶葉 chá yè tea; tea-leaves  
茶館 chá guǎn tea house

茶杯 chá bēi teacup  
紅茶 hóng chá black tea

# 差

chà/chā  
to fall short of

**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In the Bronze Inscriptions, the character 差 consists of 麥 (mài, wheat) on top and a hand and 工 (gōng, to work) underneath, suggesting the act of rubbing off wheat husks with one's hands. Its extended meanings include "to differ from," "to fall short of," "lacking," "wrong," "poor," "not up to standard," and "inferior." In Regular Script, the top part of 差 is similar to 羊 (yáng, sheep) and the bottom part is 工.

差 會意。金文上從小麥，下是一隻手與工，表示以手搓麥粒，當是搓的本字。引申為相差（差不多、差一點）、欠缺、缺少（差五分九點，差兩毛錢），不好、不夠標準（成績差、質量差）等。

金 差 篆 差

差不多 chàbùduō almost; about the same  
差別 chābié difference

差一點 chàyìdiǎn almost; missed by just a little bit  
差距 chājù gap; disparity

# 長/长

cháng  
long

zhǎng  
to grow;  
leader



**PICTOGRAPH** In its ancient form, the character 長 looks like an old man with long hair and a walking stick. The original meaning of 長 is "long hair," and the extended meanings include "long," "length," "strong point," "be good at," etc. When 長 means "head," "leader," or is used as the verb "to grow," it is pronounced as zhǎng.

長 象形。古字像一長髮拄杖之老人。本義為髮長，引申義有長度、長久、長處、擅長等。長作為動詞時，意為生長。

甲 長 金 長 篆 長 草 長 長城 chángchéng the Great Wall  
生長 shēngzhǎng grow; grow up

長期 chángqī long term  
校長 xiàozhǎng (school) president; headmaster

# 常

cháng  
often;  
ordinary



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** In Seal Script, 常 consists of the radical 巾 (jīn, scarf) and the phonetic indicator 尚 (shàng, uphold; esteem). The original meaning of 常 was "skirt" or "clothes," but later came to mean "often," "constant," and "ordinary." In its ancient form, 巾 is a pictograph of a scarf, whereas 尚 resembles smoke drifting from a window.

常 形聲。篆文從巾，尚聲。本義指裙子，與裳本為一字，後分開，常意為經常、常規、日常等。

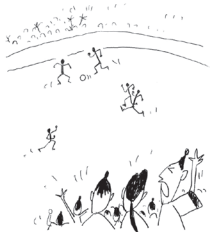
篆 常

常常 chángcháng often; frequently  
常識 chángshí common sense; general knowledge

非常 fēicháng unusual; extraordinary  
正常 zhèngcháng regular; normal

# 場/场

**chǎng**  
field



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 場 is comprised of the earth radical 土 and the phonetic element 易 (yáng), meaning “field,” “stage,” or “a large place used for a specific purpose.” In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, the upper part of 易 is 日 (rì, sun), while the lower part resembles sunlight piercing through the clouds. 易 means “sun” or “sunshine.” When comparing 易 with 易 (yì, easy), note that 易 has a horizontal line under the sun part. The simplified character 场 derives from the cursive style of the traditional character 場.

**場** 形聲。從土，易聲。古代祭神用的平地，引申為場地、處所等。易，會意。從日，從勿（像陽光穿過雲層射出狀），意指日出。簡體字场是由繁體字場的草書楷化而來。

篆 場 草 場 易 甲 日 金 易

商場 shāngchǎng mall; department store  
球場 qiúchǎng ball field; sports ground

機場 jīchǎng airport  
廣場 guǎngchǎng public square

# 唱

**chàng**  
to sing



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 唱 contains the mouth radical 口 and the phonetic component 昌 (chāng, flourishing), meaning “to sing.” 昌 consists of 日 (rì, sun) on top and 曰 (yuē, speak; say) at the bottom. Its original meaning was “to speak openly” or literally “speak under the sun” and symbolizes being truthful and frank. 昌 can also mean “prosperous” or “flourishing.”

**唱** 形聲。從口，昌聲。昌，會意。從日，從曰（說話）。本義指光明磊落的言詞，引申為美好、昌盛等。

篆 唱 昌 篆 昌

唱歌 chàngē to sing a song  
演唱 yǎnchàng sing (in a performance)

合唱 héchàng chorus; to chorus  
唱片 chàngpiàn gramophone record

# 超

**chāo**  
to exceed; to surpass

**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 超 is comprised of 走 (zǒu, walk) and the phonetic component 召 (zhào). Its original meaning is “to jump over,” from which it has derived the meanings “to surpass,” “to exceed,” “to overtake,” “to excel,” “to go beyond,” “to transcend,” “superb,” “detached,” “super-,” “ultra-,” etc. In the Bronze Inscriptions, the upper part of 走 looks like a person walking rapidly with arms swinging, while the lower part represents a human foot. 召 is made up of 口 (kǒu, mouth) and the phonetic indicator 刀 (dāo, knife), meaning “to call,” “to convene,” or “to summon.”

**超** 形聲。從走，召聲。本義為跳躍，引申義有超過、不同尋常的、在某個範圍之外等。召，形聲。從口，刀聲。意為呼喚、召集。

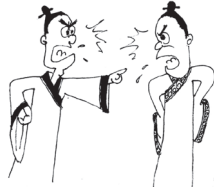
篆 超 走 金 太 篆 太

超級市場 chāojí shìchǎng supermarket  
超重 chāozhòng overweight

超人 chāorén superman  
超速 chāosù to go over the speed limit

# 吵

**chǎo**  
to quarrel;  
noisy



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 吵 consists of the mouth radical 口 and the phonetic element 少 (shǎo), meaning “noisy,” “to quarrel,” “to wrangle,” or “to disturb.” In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, 少 depicts four grains of sand, suggesting “few,” “little,” “less,” “to be short of,” and “missing.” In Regular Script, the bottom grain becomes a downward left stroke.

**吵** 形聲。篆文從言，少聲。楷書改為從口。本義為喧嚷，引申為爭吵、吵架、擾亂等。少，象形。在甲骨文像是四粒細小的沙子。意指數量不多、時間短、短缺、丟失等。

篆 吵 少 甲 𠂔 金 𠂔 篆 𠂔

吵架 chǎojià to quarrel

吵鬧 chǎonào noisy

# 襯/衬

**chèn**  
lining



**PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER** The character 襯 consists of the clothing radical 衤 and the phonetic component 親 (qīn), meaning “lining.” 襯 also extends to mean “place something underneath,” “provide a background for,” or “set off.” In the Bronze Inscriptions, 親 contains the radical 見 and the phonetic component 辛 (xīn), meaning “close” or “intimate.” In the simplified character 衬, 寸 replaces 親, since the pronunciation of 寸 (cùn) is similar to that of 襯 (chèn).

**襯** 形聲。從衣/衤，親聲。意指內衣、襯裏。親，形聲。從見，亲聲。本義為常見，引申為親近。簡體字衬右邊以寸代替親，因寸與襯聲音相近。

襯衫 chènshān shirt; blouse  
襯托 chèn tuō set off; serve as a foil to

襯褲 chèn kù underpants  
反襯 fǎn chèn set off by contrast

# 成

**chéng**  
to become;  
to succeed



**ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND** In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 成 depicts the act of splitting something with a battle-axe 戊 (wù). Its original meaning is “cease-fire” or “to complete a task,” from which the meanings “to finish,” “to accomplish,” “to succeed,” “achievement,” “to become,” “to turn into,” “capable,” “all right,” “established,” and “one-tenth” have derived. In the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, 戊 is the pictograph of a battle-axe. Later 戊 was borrowed to mean “the fifth heavenly stem” (see page 20) and “the fifth (in order).”

**成** 會意。甲骨文、金文字形像以戊（斧型兵器）劈一物，本義為休兵言和結盟或完成任務。引申義有完成、成功、成就、變成、成為、成全、成就等。戊 (wù)，象形。甲骨文、金文像一種刃寬柄長的斧型古代兵器，屬斧鉞類。後假借為天干的第五位。

甲 戊 金 戊 篆 成

完成 wánchéng to complete  
成人 chéng rén adult

成功 chénggōng success; to succeed  
成為 chéngwéi to become

# 城

chéng  
city; town



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 城 is comprised of the soil/earth radical 土 and the phonetic element 成 (chéng, succeed), originally meaning “wall.” Since all cities had walls in ancient times, 城 extended to mean “city.”

城形聲。從土，成聲。本義指城牆。古代城市皆有牆，因而引申為城市。

金 鼓 篆 城

城市 chéngshì city  
古城 gǔchéng ancient city

長城 chángchéng the Great Wall  
城堡 chéngbǎo castle; tower

# 程

chéng  
journey; schedule

PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 程 consists of the growing grain radical 禾 and the phonetic element 呈, signaling the act of weighing or measuring grain. Originally 程 was a general name of measurements of all kinds, and later came to mean “to measure,” “to assess,” “rule,” “regulation,” “order,” “procedure,” “formula,” “schedule,” “journey,” or “distance.” 呈 is formed with 口 (kǒu, mouth) and 壬 (rén, a person standing on the ground), representing a man standing on the ground and speaking. It’s used to mean “to appear,” “to show,” “to submit,” and “petition.”

程形聲。從禾，呈聲，意指稱量穀物。本義為度量衡的總稱，引申為稱量、規矩、程序、路程、里程等。呈，形聲。從口，從壬。像一人站在地上發言。意為顯露、呈現、呈送、呈子等。

篆 程

日程 rìchéng daily schedule; agenda  
里程 lǐchéng mileage

單程 dānchéng single trip; one-way  
計程車 jìchéngchē taxi; cab

# 吃

chī  
to eat



PICTOPHONETIC CHARACTER The character 吃 combines the mouth radical 口 and the phonetic 乞 (qǐ), meaning “to eat.” The character 乞 is derived from the character 气 (qì, air) meaning “to supplicate” or “beg for alms,” etc. In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, 气 looks like three thin clouds in the sky, meaning “air” or “breath.” Be sure to note the difference between 气 and 乞.

吃形聲。從口，乞聲，意為進食。乞，本為气，甲骨文、金文中像天上的雲氣浮動狀。后省去一筆為乞。乞由气字分化而來，意為請求、乞討。

篆 吃

吃飯 chīfàn to have a meal; to eat  
小吃 xiǎochī snack; refreshments

好吃 hǎochī tasty; delicious  
吃醋 chīcù to feel jealous

# 寵 / 宠

**chǒng**  
to dote on



ASSOCIATIVE AND PICTOPHONETIC COMPOUND The character 寵 combines the roof radical 宀 with the semantic and phonetic element 龍 (lóng, dragon), originally meaning “to worship,” “respectable,” or “glory.” Extended meanings of 寵 are “favor (especially of the emperor),” “to favor,” or “to pamper.” In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, 龍 is the sketch of a dragon. In Chinese tradition, the dragon is considered an auspicious totem that can bring rain to the fields, and is also the symbol of the emperor. 龙 is a variant form of 龍, from which the simplified character 龙 derives. In the character 宠, the “dragon” part is simplified.

寵形聲兼會意。從宀，龍聲，龍亦兼表神聖之意。本義為地位尊崇、榮耀，引申為上給下恩惠使之榮耀、偏愛、驕縱等。龍，象形。像傳說中神異動物龍的形狀。古時已有將龍字寫成 龙，簡化字 龙 是在 龙 字的基礎上進一步簡化。宠 屬於偏旁類推簡化。

金 寵 篆 寵 龍 甲 龍 金 龍

寵物 chǒngwù pet  
寵兒 chǒngér favorite

寵愛 chǒng'ài to dote on; to love dearly  
寵壞 chǒnghuài spoiled

# 出

**chū**  
to go out



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND In the Oracle-Bone and Bronze Inscriptions, the character 出 resembles a foot on top of a cave dwelling, meaning “to go or come out.” Extended meanings of 出 include “to appear,” “happen,” “issue,” “produce,” etc. In Regular Script, 出 looks quite different from its earlier forms.

出會意。甲骨文、金文中本字上部從止，下部像洞穴，表示人從穴居走出。

甲 出 金 出 篆 出

出來 chūlai come out  
出口 chūkǒu exit; export

出去 chūqu go out  
出現 chūxiàn to appear; to emerge

# 初

**chū**  
beginning;  
elementary



ASSOCIATIVE COMPOUND The character 初 is made up of the clothes radical 衤 (衣) and 刀 (dāo, knife), suggesting that “cutting cloth is the beginning of making a dress.” Its extended meanings are “beginning,” “start,” “first,” “original,” “elementary,” “basic,” “junior,” and “early.” Note the differences between the clothes radical 衤 (衣) and the show/altar radical 示 (示).

初會意。甲骨文從衤 / 衣，從刀，本義為裁衣是制衣之始。引申為開始、第一次（初版，初戀，初賽）、原來的（初衷）、最低的（初級、初中）、每月開始的頭十天等。

甲 初 金 初 篆 初

初期 chūqī initial stage  
初中 chūzhōng junior middle school

初次 chūcì first time  
初學者 chūxuézhě beginner

# CHARACTER INDEX

## By *Integrated Chinese* Lesson

This index contains all the characters found in *Integrated Chinese Level 1, Part 1* and *Level 1, Part 2* arranged as they appear in each lesson.

\* = Bound Form  
 MW = Measure Word  
 P = Particle  
 QP = Question Particle  
 ( ) = Variant/Radical Form

### RADICALS

人(亻)	rén	person; people	1
刀(刂)	dāo	knife	1
力	lì	power; strength	2
又	yòu	right hand; again	2
口	kǒu	mouth; entrance	2
囗	wéi	enclose	3
土	tǔ	earth	3
夕	xī	sunset; evening	3
大	dà	big; great	4
女	nǚ	female; woman	4
子	zǐ	baby; child	4
寸	cùn	inch	5
小	xiǎo	little; small	5
工	gōng	tool; work; labor	5
幺	yāo	tiny; small	6
弓	gōng	bow	6
心(忄)	xīn	heart	6
戈	gē	dagger-axe	7
手(扌)	shǒu	hand	7
日	rì	sun; day	8
月	yuè	moon; month	8
木	mù	wood	8
水(氵)	shuǐ	water	9
火(灬)	huǒ	fire	9
田	tián	field; (surname)	10
目	mù	eye	10

示(礻)	shì	to show	11
糸/纟	mì	silk	11
耳	ěr	ear	11
衣(衤)	yī	clothing	12
言(讠)	yán	word; speech	13
貝/贝	bèi	cowry shell	13
走	zǒu	to walk	14
足	zú	foot; enough	14
金	jīn	metal; gold; (surname)	14
門/门	mén	door; gate	15
隹	zhuī	short-tailed bird	15
雨	yǔ	rain	15
食	shí	to eat	16
馬/马	mǎ	horse	16

### NUMERALS

一	yī	one	17
二	èr	two	17
三	sān	three	17
四	sì	four	17
五	wǔ	five	18
六	liù	six	18
七	qī	seven	18
八	bā	eight	19
九	jiǔ	nine	19
十	shí	ten	19



## LESSON 1

你	nǐ	you	129
好	hǎo/hào	good; fine/ to like; to be fond of	77
請/请	qǐng	please; to invite	139
問/问	wèn	to ask (a question)	177
貴/贵	guì	honorable; expensive	74
姓	xìng	surname	189
我	wǒ	I; me	178
呢	ne	QP	128
姐	jiě	elder sister	94
叫	jiào	to be called; to call	93
什(甚)	shén	*what	148
麼/么	me	QP	120
名	míng	name	124
字	zì	character	222
先	xiān	first	183
生	shēng	to be born; to grow	148
李	lǐ	(surname); plum	110
友	yǒu	friend	204
王	wáng	king; (surname)	10
朋	péng	friend	133
是	shì	to be	152
老	lǎo	old	108
師/师	shī	teacher	149
嗎/吗	ma	QP	118
不	bù	not; no	33
學/学	xué	to study	190
也	yě	also; too	196
人	rén	people; person	1
中	zhōng	center; middle	218
國/国	guó	country; nation	74
北	běi	north	28
京	jīng	capital city	96
美	měi	beautiful	121

紐/纽	niǔ	knob; button	130
約/约	yuē	agreement; appointment	208

## LESSON 2

那	nà/nèi	that	126
的	de	possessive P	49
照	zhào	photograph; to shine	213
片	piàn	MW (for tablets, films); slice	134
這/这	zhè(i)	this	214
爸	bà	father; dad	23
媽/妈	mā	mother; mom	117
個/个	gè	MW (general)	68
孩	hái	child	75
誰/谁	shéi	who	147
她	tā	she	163
男	nán	male	127
弟	dì	younger brother	50
他	tā	he	163
哥	gē	elder brother	67
兒/儿	ér	son; child	57
有	yǒu	to have; to exist	204
沒(沒)	méi/ mò	(have) not/ to sink	121
高	gāo	tall; high	66
文	wén	(written) language; script	177
家	jiā	family; home	89
幾/几	jǐ	how many; a few	87
兩/两	liǎng	two; a couple of	113
妹	mèi	younger sister	122
和	hé/*huo	and; harmonious/ *warm	78
做	zuò	to do	225
作	zuò	to work; to do	225
律	lǜ	law; rule	116
都	dōu/dū	all; both/ capital	54
醫/医	yī	doctor; medicine	197

白	bái	white; (surname)	24
英	yīng	flower; hero; *England	201
愛/爱	ài	love; to love	22

### LESSON 3

號/号	hào	number	77
星	xīng	star	188
期	qī	period (of time)	136
天	tiān	sky; day	168
今	jīn	today; now	95
年	nián	year	129
多	duō	many; much	56
歲/岁	suì	age	162
吃	chī	to eat	39
飯/饭	fàn	meal; (cooked) rice	59
怎	zěn	how	211
樣/样	yàng	kind; appearance	194
太	tài	too; extremely	164
了	le	P	108
謝/谢	xiè	to thank	187
喜	xǐ	to like; happy	181
歡/欢	huān	happy; joyous	83
菜/菜	cài	dish; cuisine; vegetable	34
還/还	hái/huán	still; yet/ to exchange; to return	75
可	kě	but; to permit	102
們/们	men	*(plural suffix)	122
點/点	diǎn	dot; o'clock	51
半	bàn	half	25
晚	wǎn	evening; late	173
上	shàng	above; top	145
見/见	jiàn	to see	13
再	zài	again	210
現/现	xiàn	now; present	183
在	zài	at; in; on	210

刻	kè	quarter (hour); to carve	103
事	shì	affair; matter	151
很	hěn	very	79
忙	máng	busy	119
明	míng	bright	124
為/为	wèi/wéi	for	176
因	yīn	because	200
同	tóng	same	170
認/认	rèn	to recognize; to know	142
識/识	shí	to recognize	150

### LESSON 4

週/周	zhōu	week; cycle	220
末	mò	end	124
打	dǎ	to hit	45
球	qiú	ball	140
看	kàn	to watch; to read	101
電/电	diàn	electricity	52
視/视	shì	to view; to look at	152
唱	chàng	to sing	37
歌	gē	song	68
跳	tiào	to jump	169
舞	wǔ	to dance; dance	179
聽/听	tīng	to listen	169
音	yīn	sound; music	200
樂/乐	yuè/ lè	music/ happy	209
書/书	shū	book	155
對/对	duì	correct; toward	56
時/时	shí	time	149
候	hòu	time; season; await	80
影	yǐng	shadow	202
常	cháng	often; ordinary	36
去	qù	to go	140
外	wài	outside; foreign	172
客	kè	guest	103

昨	zuó	yesterday	224
所	suǒ	*so; place	162
以	yǐ	with	198
久	jiǔ	long time	98
錯/错	cuò	wrong; error	45
想	xiǎng	to want to; to think	185
覺/觉	jiào/jué	to sleep/ to feel; to think	99
得	dé/děi	to obtain; to get; P/ must; have to	48
意	yì	meaning	199
思	sī	to think	159
只	zhǐ	only	217
睡	shuì	to sleep	158
算	suàn	to calculate	161
找	zhǎo	to look for; to seek	212
別/别	bié	other; do not	32

## LESSON 5

呀	ya	P	192
進/进	jìn	to enter	96
快	kuài	fast; quick	105
來/来	lái	to come	106
介	jiè	to be between	94
紹/绍	shào	to introduce; to continue	146
下	xià	below; under	182
興/兴	xìng	mood; interest	189
漂	piào/ piāo	*pretty/ to float	135
亮	liàng	bright	113
坐	zuò	to sit	225
哪	nǎ/něi	which	126
校	xiào	school	186
喝	hē	to drink	78
茶	chá	tea	35
咖	kā	*coffee	100
啡	fēi	*coffee	60

吧	ba	P (a sentence-ending particle)	23
要	yào	to want	195
瓶	píng	bottle	135
起	qǐ	to rise	136
給/给	gěi	to give	68
杯	bēi	cup; glass	28
玩	wán	to play; to have fun	173
圖/图	tú	picture; drawing	171
館/馆	guǎn	place; building	73
聊	liáo	to chat	113
才	cái	not until; only then	34
回	huí	to return	84

## LESSON 6

話/话	huà	speech	82
喂	wéi/wèi	Hello!; Hey!	176
就	jiù	just	99
您	nín	you (polite)	130
位	wèi	MW (for people [polite])	175
午	wǔ	noon	178
間/间	jiān	MW (for rooms); between	90
題/题	tí	topic; question	167
開/开	kāi	to open; to operate	100
會/会	huì	meeting	84
節/节	jié	MW (for classes); holiday	94
課/课	kè	class; lesson	104
級/级	jí	grade; level	86
考	kǎo	test; to test	101
試/试	shì	test; to try	153
後/后	hòu	after; behind	80
空	kòng/ kōng	free time/ empty; sky	104
方	fāng	square; side; method	9
便	biàn/ pián	convenient; handy/ *inexpensive	31
到	dào	to arrive	48

辦/办	bàn	to manage	25
公	gōng	public	69
室	shì	room	152
行	xíng/ háng	to walk; okay/ firm; bank	189
等	děng	to wait; rank	50
氣/气	qì	air	137
幫/帮	bāng	to help	26
準/准	zhǔn	standard; criterion	222
備/备	bèi	to prepare	29
練/练	liàn	to practice; to drill	112
習/习	xí	to practice	181
說/说	shuō	to speak	158
啊	a	P	21
但	dàn	but; however	46
跟	gēn	with; and	69
面	miàn	face	123

## LESSON 7

復/复	fù	to duplicate	64
寫/写	xiě	to write	187
慢	màn	slow	119
枝	zhī	branch; MW (for long, thin objects)	216
筆/笔	bǐ	pen; writing brush	30
張/张	zhāng	MW (for flat objects); (surname)	212
紙/纸	zhǐ	paper	217
教(教)	jiāo/jiào	to teach/ education	92
懂/懂	dǒng	to understand	54
真(真)	zhēn	true; real; really	214
裏/裡/里	lǐ	inside	110
預/预	yù	in advance; beforehand	206
第	dì	(ordinal prefix)	51
語/语	yǔ	language	205

法	fǎ	method; way; law	58
容	róng	to hold; to contain	142
易	yì	easy	199
詞/词	cí	word	43
漢/汉	hàn	Chinese ethnicity	76
難/难	nán	difficult; hard	127
平	píng	level; even	135
早	zǎo	early	211
功	gōng	skill	70
始	shǐ	begin	150
唸/念	niàn	to read aloud	129
錄/录	lù	to record	115
帥/帅	shuài	handsome; smart	157
酷	kù	cool; cruel	105

## LESSON 8

篇	piān	MW (for articles)	134
記/记	jì	to remember; to record	88
累	lèi	tired	108
床(牀)	chuáng	bed	42
洗	xǐ	to wash	181
澡	zǎo	bath	211
邊/边	biān	side	31
發/发	fā	to emit; to issue	57
新	xīn	new	188
腦/脑	nǎo	brain	128
餐	cān	meal	34
廳/厅	tīng	hall	170
網/网	wǎng	net	174
宿	sù	to stay; to lodge	160
舍	shè	house; residence	147
正	zhèng	just; upright	215
前	qián	front; before	138
告	gào	to tell; to inform	67

訴/诉	sù	to tell; to relate	161
已	yǐ	already	198
經/经	jīng	to pass through	97
知	zhī	to know	216
道	dào	road; way	48
封	fēng	MW (for letters)	62
信	xìn	letter; to believe	188
最	zuì	most	224
近	jìn	close; near	95
除	chú	except	41
專/专	zhuān	special	221
業/业	yè	profession	197
希	xī	to hope	180
望	wàng	to hope; to gaze	175
能	néng	can; to be able to	128
用	yòng	to use	203
笑	xiào	to laugh; to smile	186
祝	zhù	to wish (well)	221

## LESSON 9

商	shāng	commerce; business	145
店	diàn	store; shop	51
買/买	mǎi	to buy	118
東/东	dōng	east	53
西	xī	west	180
售	shòu	sale; to sell	154
貨/货	huò	merchandise	85
員/员	yuán	personnel	206
服	fú	clothing; to serve	62
件	jiàn	MW (for items)	91
襯/衬	chèn	lining	38
衫	shān	shirt	145
顏/颜	yán	face; countenance	192
色	sè	color	144
黃/黄	huáng	yellow	84

紅/红	hóng	red	79
穿	chuān	to wear; to pass through	42
條/条	tiáo	MW (for long, thin objects)	168
褲/裤	kù	pants	105
宜	yí	suitable	197
如	rú	as; if	143
果	guǒ	fruit; result	74
長/长	cháng/ zhǎng	long/ to grow; leader	36
短	duǎn	short	55
合	hé	to suit; to fit	78
適/适	shì	to suit; appropriate	153
共	gòng	altogether	70
少	shǎo/ shào	few; little; less/ young	146
錢/钱	qián	money	138
塊/块	kuài	piece; dollar	106
毛	máo	hair; dime	120
分	fēn	penny; minute	61
百	bǎi	hundred	20
雙/双	shuāng	pair	157
鞋	xié	shoes	187
換/换	huàn	to exchange; to change	83
黑	hēi	black	79
雖/虽	suī	although	162
然	rán	like that; so	141
種/种	zhǒng/ zhòng	kinds; types/ to plant	219
挺	tǐng	very; rather	170
它	tā	it	163
刷	shuā	to brush; to swipe	157
卡	kǎ	card	100
收	shōu	to receive; to accept	153
過/过	guò	to pass	75
付	fù	to pay	63

## LESSON 10

寒	hán	cold	76
假	jià	vacation	90
飛/飞	fēi	to fly	60
機/机	jī	machine	86
票	piào	ticket	134
場/场	chǎng	field	37
汽	qì	steam; gas	137
車/车	chē	vehicle; car	12
或	huò	or	85
者	zhě	(aux. verb)	213
地	dì/de	earth/ P	50
鐵/铁	tiě	iron	169
站	zhàn	stand; station	212
綠/绿	lǜ	green	117
線/线	xiàn	line; route	184
藍/蓝	lán	blue	107
麻	má	hemp; numb	117
煩/烦	fán	to bother; to trouble	58
出	chū	to go out	40
租	zū	to rent	223
送	sòng	to see off; to deliver	159
郵/邮	yóu	post; mail	204
讓/让	ràng	to allow; to cause; to let	141
花	huā	to spend; flower	81
每	měi	every; each	121
城	chéng	city; town	39
市	shì	city; market	151
特	tè	special	166
速	sù	speed	160
路	lù	road; way	115
緊/紧	jǐn	tense; tight	95
自	zì	self	223
己	jǐ	oneself	87
灣/湾	wān	strait; bay	172

## LESSON 11

比	bǐ	to compare	30
雪	xuě	snow	190
園/园	yuán	garden	207
滑	huá	slippery; to slide	81
冰	bīng	ice	32
剛/刚	gāng	just now	66
報/报	bào	to report; newspaper	27
更	gèng/ gēng	even more/ to alternate	69
而	ér	(conj.)	57
且	qiě	(conj.)	138
暖	nuǎn	warm	130
冷	lěng	cold	109
碟	dié	disc; saucer	52
非	fēi	not; non-	60
糟	zāo	messy; rotten	210
糕	gāo	cake	67
冬	dōng	winter	53
夏	xià	summer	182
熱/热	rè	hot	142
春	chūn	spring	43
秋	qiū	autumn; fall	140
舒	shū	to stretch; to smooth out	156
加	jiā	to add	89
州	zhōu	administrative division; state	219
悶/闷	mēn/ mèn	stuffy/ depressed	122

## LESSON 12

像	xiàng	likeness; portrait	185
務/务	wù	affair; task	179
桌	zhuō	table; desk	222
盤/盘	pán	plate; dish	132
餃/饺	jiǎo	dumpling	93

素	sù	vegetarian; made from vegetables	160
豆	dòu	bean	55
腐	fǔ	rotten; to turn bad	62
放	fàng	to put; to place	59
肉	ròu	meat; flesh	143
碗	wǎn	bowl	173
酸	suān	sour	161
辣	là	spicy	106
湯/汤	tāng	soup	164
味	wèi	flavor; taste	176
精	jīng	essence; refined	97
鹽/盐	yán	salt	193
賣/卖	mài	to sell	119
完	wán	finished	172
青	qīng	green; blue	139
渴	kě	thirsty	103
些	xiē	MW (for indefinite amount); some	186
够	gòu	enough	71
餓/饿	è	hungry	56
傳	fù	tutor; instructor	64
糖	táng	sugar; candy	165
醋	cù	vinegar	44
魚/鱼	yú	fish	16
甜	tián	sweet	168
極/极	jí	extremely; pole	86
燒/烧	shāo	to burn	146
牛	niú	cow; ox	7
涼/凉	liáng	cool	112
拌	bàn	to mix	25
瓜	guā	melon; gourd	72
米	mǐ	uncooked rice	12
忘	wàng	to forget	174
帶/带	dài	to bring; to take; to carry	45
清	qīng	clear; clean; pure	139

楚	chǔ	clear; neat	41
關/关	guān	to involve; to close	72
係/系	xì	to relate to	182
海	hǎi	sea	76

## LESSON 13

運/运	yùn	to move	209
動/动	dòng	to move	54
旁	páng	side; edge	132
遠/远	yuǎn	far	207
離/离	lí	away from	109
活	huó	to live; living	85
拿	ná	to take; to get	125
次	cì	MW (for occurrences)	43
從/从	cóng	from	44
直	zhí	straight	217
往	wǎng	toward; past	174
南	nán	south	127
拐	guǎi	to turn	72
哎	āi	(exclamatory particle to express surprise or dissatisfaction)	22
燈/灯	dēng	light; lamp	49
右	yòu	right	205
左	zuǒ	left	224

## LESSON 14

表	biǎo	surface; matrilineal relatives	32
禮/礼	lǐ	gift; ceremony	111
物	wù	thing; matter	179
本	běn	MW (for books); foundation	29
飲/饮	yǐn	to drink	200
料	liào	material	114
把	bǎ	MW (for objects with handles)	23
蘋/苹	píng	component in apple 蘋果/苹果	136

梨	lí	pear	109
住	zhù	to live (in a certain place)	220
重	zhòng/ chóng	heavy; serious/ again	219
接	jiē	to receive; to welcome	93
樓/楼	lóu	multi-storied building; floor (of building)	114
鐘/钟	zhōng	clock	218
頭/头	tóu	head; top	171
聰/聪	cōng	able to hear well; smart	44
暑	shǔ	heat; summer	156
班	bān	class	24
屬/属	shǔ	to belong to	156
狗	gǒu	dog	70
臉/脸	liǎn	face	112
圓/圆	yuán	round	207
眼	yǎn	eye	193
睛	jīng	eyeball	96
鼻	bí	nose	29
嘴	zuǐ	mouth	223
定	dìng	settled; decided	52
蛋	dàn	egg	47
倫/伦	lún	ethics; moral principles	116
姆	mǔ	housemaid	125

## LESSON 15

病	bìng	illness; to become ill	33
院	yuàn	yard	208
肚	dù	belly; abdomen	55
疼	téng	to be painful	166
死	sǐ	to die; (a complement indicating an extreme degree)	159
夜	yè	night	196
廁	cè	toilet	35
箱	xiāng	box; case	184
躺	tǎng	to lie (down)	165

檢/检	jiǎn	to inspect	91
查	chá	to check; to look up	35
壞/坏	huài	bad	83
針/针	zhēn	needle	214
藥/药	yào	medicine	195
片	piàn	MW (for tablet; slice); slice	134
遍	biàn	MW (for complete courses of an action or instances of an action)	31
感	gǎn	to feel; to sense	65
冒	mào	to belch; to emit	120
身	shēn	body	148
體/体	tǐ	body	167
癢/痒	yǎng	itchy	194
敏	mǐn	nimble; agile	123
健	jiàn	healthy	92
康	kāng	healthy; affluent	101
保	bǎo	to protect; insurance	27
險/险	xiǎn	risk; danger	183
趕/赶	gǎn	to rush for	65
越	yuè	to exceed	209
休	xiū	to cease; to rest	190
息	xī	to cease; to rest	180
懶/懒	lǎn	lazy	107
亂/乱	luàn	randomly; messily	115

## LESSON 16

印	yìn	to print	201
象	xiàng	elephant; appearance; shape	185
成	chéng	to become; to succeed	38
演	yǎn	to act; to perform	193
費/费	fèi	to spend; to take (effort)	61
倆/俩	liǎ	(coll.) two	111
碼/码	mǎ	(symbol indicating a number)	118
搬	bān	to move	24
掃/扫	sǎo	to sweep	144



整	zhěng	to put in order	215
理	lǐ	reason; in good order	110
房	fáng	house	59
旅	lǚ	to travel	116

## LESSON 17

吵	chǎo	to quarrel; noisy	38
連/连	lián	even; to link	111
廣/广	guǎng	wide; vast	73
附	fù	to attach; near	63
套	tào	MW (for suite or set)	165
寓	yù	residence	205
臥/卧	wò	to lie (down)	178
廚/厨	chú	kitchen	41
衛/卫	wèi	to guard; to protect	177
傢/家	jiā	furniture	89
具	jù	tool; utensil	99
乾/干	gān	dry	65
淨/净	jìng	clean; pure	97
沙	shā	sand	144
椅	yǐ	chair	199
架	jià	shelf	90
安	ān	calm; safe	22
靜/静	jìng	quiet	98
元	yuán	MW (for unit of Chinese currency); yuan	206
民	mín	the people; folk	123
幣/币	bì	currency; coin	30
差	chà	to fall short of	36
押	yā	to give as security	191
當/当	dāng	to serve as; to be	47
另	lìng	other; another	114
准	zhǔn	to allow	222
養/养	yǎng	to raise	194
趣	qù	interest; interesting	141
寵/宠	chǒng	to dote on	40

## LESSON 18

胖	pàng	fat	132
怕	pà	to fear; to be afraid of	131
簡/简	jiǎn	simple	91
單/单	dān	single	46
跑	pǎo	to run	133
步	bù	step; pace	33
受	shòu	to bear	154
拍	pāi	to clap; racket	131
籃/篮	lán	basket	107
游	yóu	to swim	203
泳	yǒng	swimming	202
危	wēi	danger	175
淹	yān	to submerge; to drown	192
願/愿	yuàn	wish; hope	208
提	tí	to lift	167
賽/赛	sài	game; competition	143
際/际	jì	border; boundary	88
式	shì	type; style	151
應/应	yīng/ yìng	should/ to respond	201
該/该	gāi	should; ought to	64
腳/脚	jiǎo	foot	92
踢	tī	to kick	166
抱	bào	to hold or carry in one's arms	27
壓/压	yā	to press; to weigh down	191
被	bèi	by; quilt	28
擔/担	dān	to be burdened with	46
棒	bàng	fantastic	26

## LESSON 19

司	sī	to take charge of	158
實/实	shí	solid; reality	150
計/计	jì	to count	87
劃/划	huà	to plan; to divide	82
父	fù	father	63

母	mǔ	mother	125
首	shǒu	head	154
政	zhèng	politics	215
治	zhì	to govern; to manage	218
化	huà	to transform; to influence	82
勝/胜	shèng	victory; wonderful	149
古	gǔ	ancient	71
蹟/迹	jì	remains; ruins	88
導/导	dǎo	to lead; to guide	47
遊/游	yóu	to roam; to travel	203
護/护	hù	to protect	81
訂/订	dìng	to reserve; to book (a ticket, a hotel room, etc.)	53
簽/签	qiān	to sign	137
證/证	zhèng	proof; certificate	216
社	shè	organized body	147
香	xiāng	fragrant	184
港	gǎng	harbor	66
臺/台	tái	platform; deck	164
初	chū	beginning; elementary	40
程	chéng	journey; schedule	39
返	fǎn	to return	58
航	háng	to navigate	77
千	qiān	thousand	20
折	zhé	to fold	213
轉/转	zhuǎn/ zhuàn	to turn	221
靠	kào	to lean on; to rely on	102
窗	chuāng	window	42
戶/户	hù	door; household	80
份	fèn	MW (for meal orders, jobs)	61

## LESSON 20

托	tuō	to entrust	171
包	bāo	bag; sack; bundle; package	26
超	chāo	to exceed; to surpass	37
登	dēng	to climb; to ascend	49
牌	pái	plate; card; brand	131
哭	kū	to cry; to weep	104
顧/顾	gù	to look after; to attend to	71
叔	shū	uncle	155
阿	ā	(a prefix)	21
姨	yí	aunt	198
迎	yíng	to welcome	202
瘦	shòu	thin; slim (of a person or animal)	155
爺/爷	yé	grandpa; (respectful form of address for elderly men)	195
奶	nǎi	milk; (paternal) grandmother	126
烤	kǎo	to bake; to roast; to grill	102
鴨/鸭	yā	duck	191

## LEVEL 2

慣/惯	guàn	to be used to	73
啤	pí	*beer	133
酒	jiǔ	wine	98
助	zhù	to assist; to aid	220
葉/叶	yè	leaf	196