

An Introduction to Chinese Language



The Chinese language

The Chinese languages are the languages of the Han people, the major ethnic group of China, including both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China. The Chinese languages are spoken by over one billion people. Approximately 95 percent of the Chinese population speaks Chinese, as opposed to the non-Chinese languages such as Tibetan, Mongolian, Lolo, Miao, and Tai spoken by minorities. The vast majority of the Chinese-speaking population is in China (over 980 million), Hong Kong, and Taiwan (19 million), but substantial numbers are also found throughout the whole of southeast Asia, especially in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Important Chinese-speaking communities are also found in many other parts of the world, especially in Europe, North and South America, and the Hawaiian Islands.

Pinyin --- *Pinyin* was introduced by Chinese government in 1950's. It is used to transcribe the standard Mandarin. Therefore, it is widely used in China's schools to teach children the correct pronunciation of Mandarin. It has now become an international standard for transcribing Chinese into the Roman alphabet.

Pinyin uses the 26 English letters to form a phonetic alphabet, but many of those sounds do not correspond to their equivalent in English. *Pinyin* syllables are composed of three parts: **initials**, **finals** and **tone marks**. There are 21 initials, 38 finals and 4 tone marks.

中文

Characters

Chinese is written in characters. How many characters are there? An well-educated person can probably recognize more than 6,000 characters while the most common computer encoding system in Taiwan and Hong Kong incorporates about 13,000 characters, and the standard system in China incorporates about 6,500 characters. However, since Chinese words are generally composed of two characters, only a few thousand characters can be used to understand many tens or even hundreds of thousands of words. Thus, knowledge of 2 or 3 thousand is good enough for everyday use of communication in Chinese.

What will you learn about Mandarin at Lingo?

No. of Lessons: 11 Lessons per module

Mode of Conduct: Interaction

Topics covered: Daily Conversation

Basic Level

Chinese phonetics: a) formation of Chinese syllables; b) tones and changes of tones; c) rules of writing the transcription etc.

Grammar: a) basic sentence structure, e.g. subject + verb + object; b) affirmative-negative sentence; c) questions with interrogative pronouns, e.g. how; what; who; where etc. d) prepositions; e) measure words; f) action in progress(I), e.g. zhèngzài + verb; g) past tense (I), e.g. verb + le; h) past tense(II), e.g. verb + guò.....etc.

Conversation: greetings; self-introduction; time; money; shopping; making an appointment; making phone calls; family; sickness; transportation etc.

Intermediate Level

Grammar: a) comparative sentence; b) directional complements; c) complement of state; the flexible usage of the interrogative pronouns; d) question prefix; e) how to use two neighbouring numerals; f) the differences amongst the similar words etc.

Conversation: weather; directions; sports; invitation; cuisine and tastes; clothes and colors; travel and hotel reservation; congratulations and Chinese Zodiac; advise; air travel etc.

Advanced Level

Grammar: a) “bǎ” sentence; b) passive sentence or “bèi” sentence; c) past tense(III), e.g. shì.....de; d) action in progress(II), e.g.zhe; e) complements of result, duration and direction; f) grammar summary will be presented etc.

Conversation: trust and responsibility; emotions; China famous attractive spots and historical sites; idiom stories; fashion; friendship and family tie; housing; life; memory etc.