



Learning Chinese

Chinese is the native language of over a billion speakers, more people than any other language. It is spoken in China, Singapore, Malaysia, and in many overseas Chinese communities.

Writing Systems:

Simplified, Traditional, and Pinyin

- **Simplified Chinese** (e.g. 汉语) characters are widely used in the People's Republic of China. They are based on and share most of their characters with traditional Chinese characters.
- **Traditional Chinese** (e.g. 漢語) characters are in widespread use in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and in many overseas Chinese communities. Knowledge of traditional characters will also allow you to recognize many characters in classical Chinese texts.
- **Pinyin** (e.g. hàn yǔ) is a method of writing Chinese using the Roman alphabet. Pinyin is a transliteration of characters into the Roman script and is used for teaching the language phonetically and for typing Chinese.

Language Tips

- Chinese is written with no spaces between words.
- Each character in Chinese corresponds to a single syllable.
- The meaning of a Chinese syllable depends on the tone with which it is spoken. Chinese has four tones:

1	mā	2	má	3	mǎ	4	mà
	steady high		high rising		low falling-rising		falling
- A tone may change slightly depending on the tones of its neighboring syllables. The most common example that you will encounter is when two third tones occur together; the first one will change into a second tone.
- Nouns in Chinese do not change between singular and plural. For example, the word for person, 人 (rén), can refer to 'person' or 'people' depending on the context.
- Verb forms don't change based on the person performing the action. This is one aspect of learning Chinese that is much easier than many other languages!
- Chinese has no exact equivalent of "yes". Instead of affirming with one word, a Chinese speaker generally repeats the verb.

Language Family

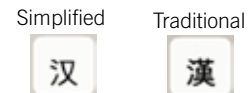
Sino-Tibetan

Dialect

Standard Mandarin is based on Northern Chinese dialects. Standard Mandarin is the language of business, education, and the media in all regions of China, and is widely understood in almost every corner of the Chinese-speaking world.

Your Learning Options

- Rosetta Stone offers you the choice of Simplified or Traditional characters for your course.



- Rosetta Stone also allows you to learn to speak and understand spoken Chinese without learning Chinese characters. If this is your objective, you can study your course in the pinyin script.



- Rosetta Stone gives you the ability to view pinyin along with the characters. You can use this feature as a pronunciation guide for the characters you encounter in the course.

