



LESSON A.3 - PART 1

CHINESE CHARACTERS

汉字 HÀNZÌ

LESSON A.2 REVISION



2

Construct words/phrases from the below characters:

早上
zǎoshàng

问
wèn

明
míng

吃了
chīle

再
zài

慢
màn

熊
xióng

没有?
méiyǒu

好
hǎo

天
tiān

见
jiàn

候
hòu

猫
māo

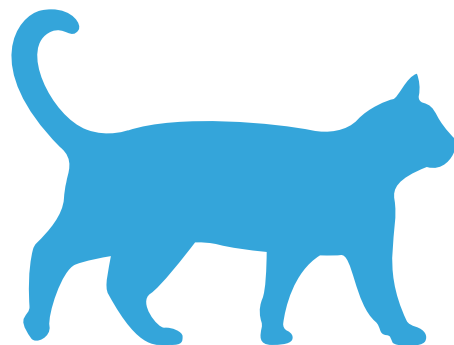
走
zǒu



- There are two forms of written Chinese:
 1. **Traditional** characters - used in most Chinese-speaking countries outside mainland China, e.g. Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau
 2. **Simplified** characters - predominantly used in mainland China

Traditional

貓



Simplified

猫

FOUR TYPES

- There is no really easy way to learn characters. Each one needs to be memorised. However, you can try to picture it.



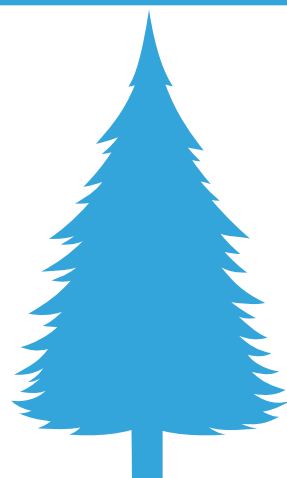
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Pictograph

木

The character mimics the real object

wood/tree



Ideograph

二

The character is a portrait of an idea

two

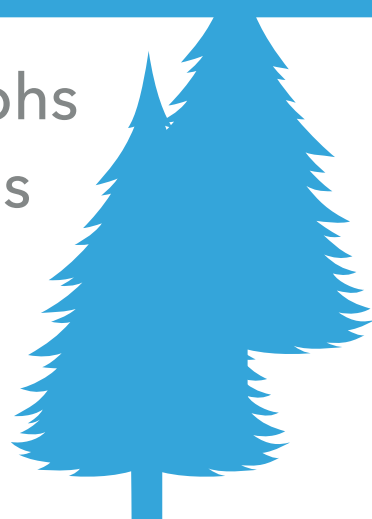


Combination

林

Put pictographs or ideographs together to create new character

forest



Phonograph

Combine sound and meaning

sound

meaning

new character

元

+

辶

=

远

yuán

to walk quickly

far

元

+

口

=

园

yuán

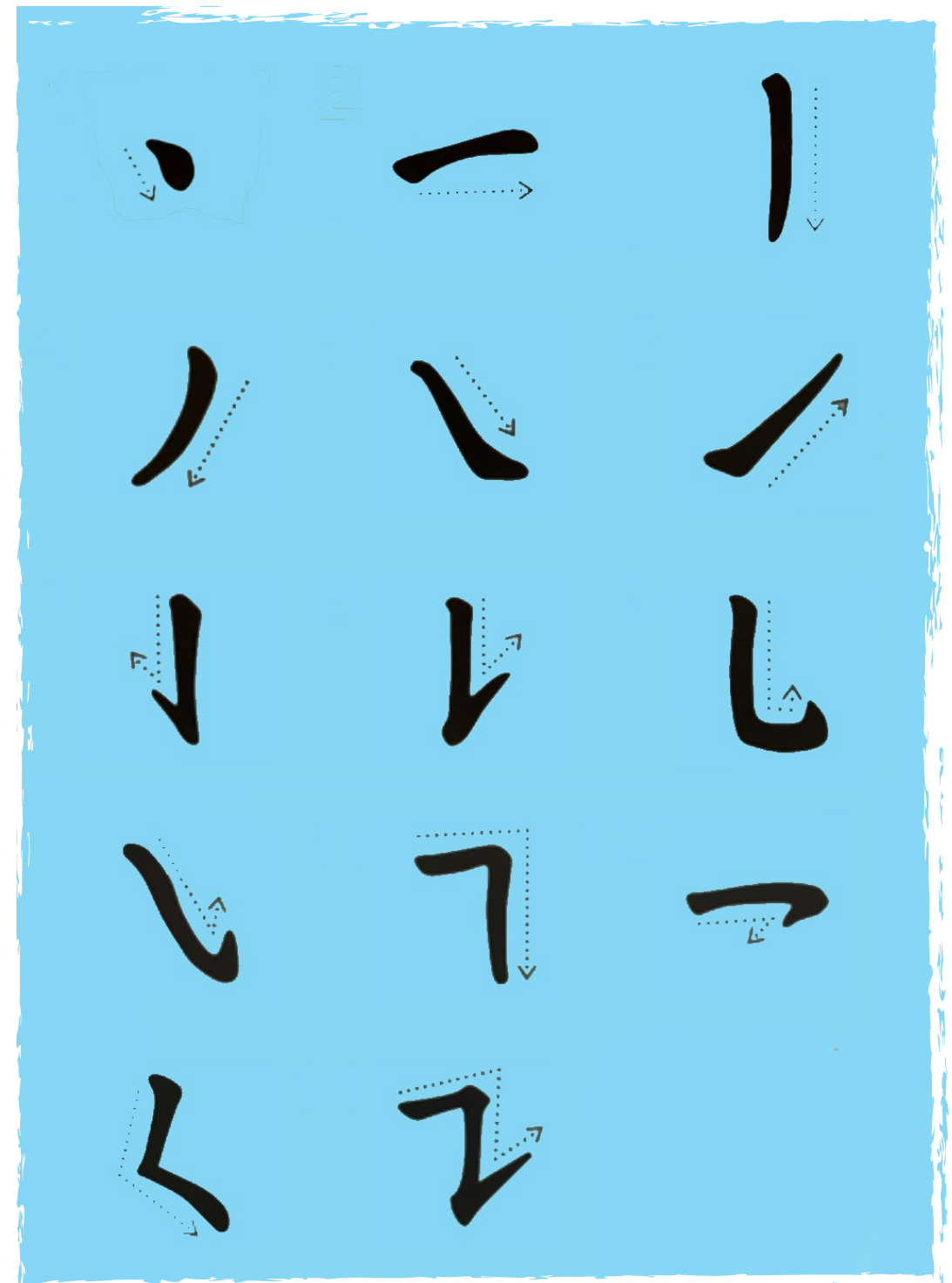
enclosure

garden



- Each character is made up of a set of strokes.
- These strokes are always written in the **same manner**
- Following the **rule** of where to start and where to end would make it easier in learning new characters.

Practice makes perfect!

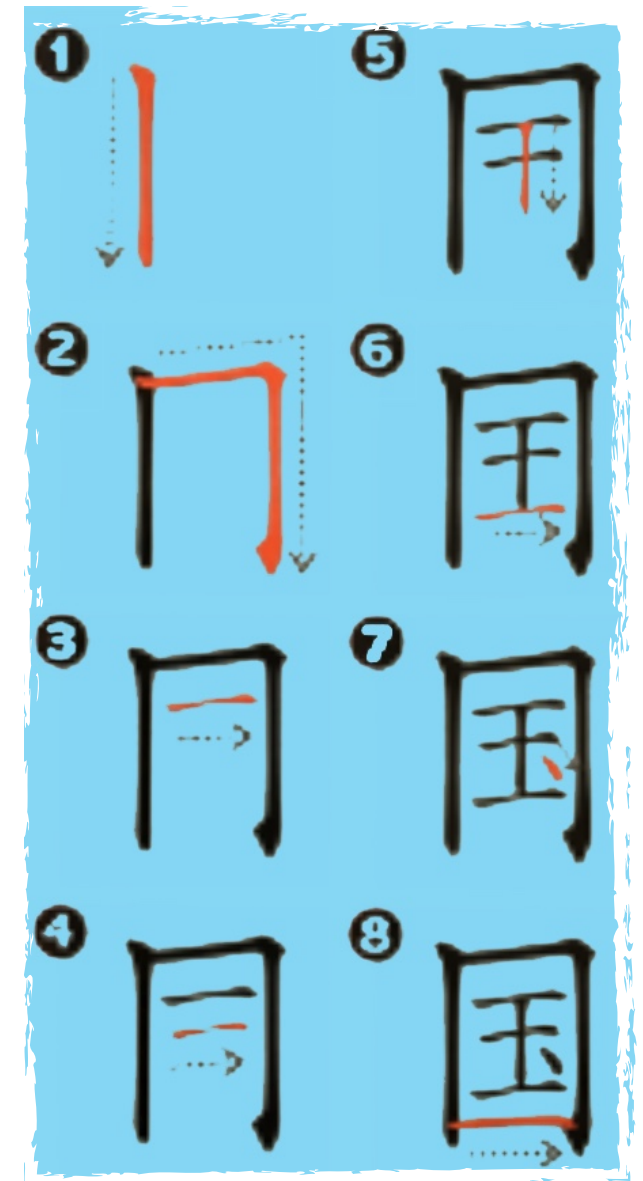




- Chinese writing emphasizes on a **smooth** movement.
- There are guidelines to help users but they are **not fail-safe**. It all depends on what looks best or which order minimises blobbing when scholars are using brushes and ink to write.

General rules:

- From top to bottom
- From left to right
- From outside to inside
- From middle to sides





LESSON A.3 - PART 2

ESSENTIAL CONVERSATION

基本对话 JĪBĚN DUÌHUÀ

FEW ESSENTIAL WORDS



8

我

wǒ

me/I

叫

jiào

call

高兴

gāoxìng

happy

认识

rènshi

meet

INTRODUCING YOURSELF



9

您叫什么?
nín jiào shénme

What's your name?
(Lit. you call what)

我叫.....
wǒ jiào

I'm called...

很高兴认识您。
hěn gāoxìng rènshì nín

Very pleased to meet
you.

我也是。
wǒ yěshì

Me too.

SORRY



10

对不起

duìbùqǐ

Sorry

我不明白

wǒ bù míngbái

I don't
understand

请重复

qǐng chóngfù

Please repeat

不用谢

*bùyòng xiè**

You are
welcome
(no need for thanks)

Note: for 不 (bù), change the tone to 2nd tone when preceding 4th tone.

HOW'S IT GOING?



怎么样?

zěnmeyàng

How's it going?

(Lit. How is it like)

不错

*bùcuò**

Not bad

马马虎虎

*mǎmǎhūhū **

So-so

(Lit. horse horse tiger tiger)

真棒!

zhēn bàng

Awesome!

Note: for 不 (bù), change the tone to 2nd tone when preceding 4th tone.
For a series of 3rd tones, change all the former ones to 2nd



你会说英语吗?

nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?

Can you speak
English?

我可以。

*wǒ kěyǐ **

I can.

你会说普通话吗?

nǐ huì shuō pǔtōnghuà ma?

Can you speak Mandarin?

一点儿

*yīdiǎn er **

A little.

Note: for a series of 3rd tones, change all the former ones to 2nd tone.
For 一 (yī), change the tone to fourth tone when preceding a 3rd tone



To be 是 (shì)

- In English, "to be" change forms with the subject, i.e. "I am", "we are", "he is" etc. In Chinese 是 (shì) does not change with the subject.
- It is skipped in front of an adjective.
- It also means "yes".
- Negative: add not 不 (bù) in the front.
- Example: He is Chinese 他是中国人 (tā shì zhōngguó rén)

to be

是
shì

not to be

不是
bù shì

To have 有

- An informal and straightforward way to talk about possession is to use the expression 有, meaning have or has.
- Negative: add not 没 méi in the front.
- Example: He has money 他有钱 (tā yǒu qián)

to have

有
yǒu

not to have

没有
méi yǒu

Of 的

- A common possessive particle is 的, meaning of or 's.
- It can be skipped sometimes to simplify the sentence.
- When this is put at the end, it becomes an adverb, meaning truly or really.
- Example: My home 我的家 (wǒ de jiā)
- Example: Really delicious! 很好吃的! (hěn hào chī de)

of

的
de



Why Mandarin?

- China has the biggest population in the world - **1.3 billion** people.
- It is home to a multitude of languages and dialects - over 200!
- There are 3 major languages spoken in China:

Mandarin, Shanghaiese, and Cantonese

- Mandarin has more native speakers than any other language in the world.
- Chinese people learn Mandarin too. It is studied like a foreign language class, to use for speaking with non-locals in China.
- Mandarin is easier than Cantonese which has at least **8 tones**!



Zhōngwén 中文 "The Chinese Language"

- There are several ways to refer to the Chinese language:
 1. **Zhōngwén** 中文 - originally referred to the written Chinese language but now generally also includes spoken Chinese
 2. **Hànyǔ** 汉语 - a more precise term which covers both the spoken and the written Chinese
 3. **Zhōngguóhuà** 中国话 - a colloquial term for spoken Chinese
 4. **Guóyǔ** 国语 - national spoken Chinese designated by the government in 1919. Taiwan has continued to use this till today
 5. **Pǔtōnghuà** 普通话 - the official name for "**Mandarin**" since the establishment of the People's Republic of China PRC in 1949



- There are many ways to use “horse” as a colloquial expression in Mandarin.
- Quite often there is a sense of urgency.

I'll be right there!

我马上到!
*wǒ mǎshàng dào**

I'll do it right away!

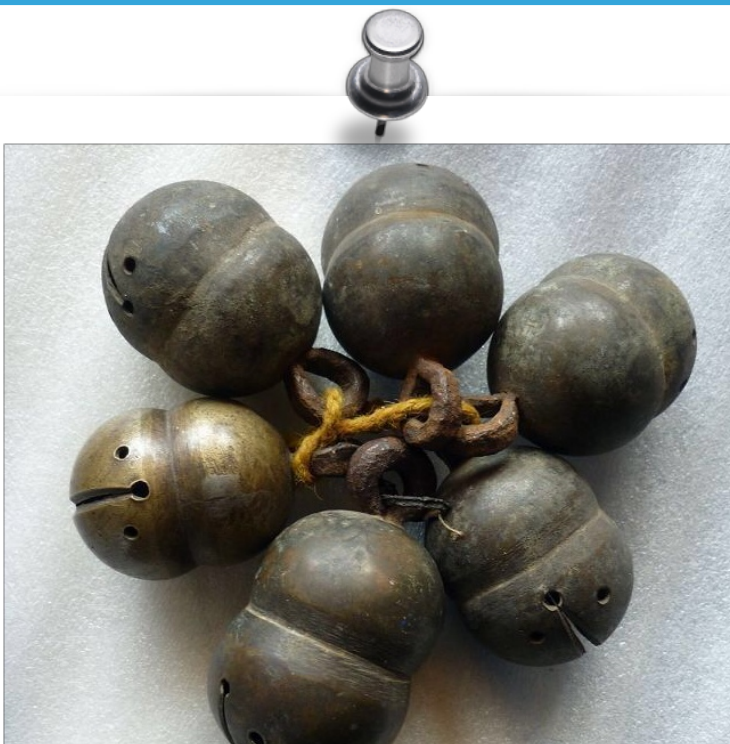
我马上做!
*wǒ mǎshàng zuò!**

SO-SO (horse horse tiger tiger)

马马虎虎
*mǎmǎhūhū **

- The above idiom has two meanings: 1. very careless; do not do things seriously. 2. just passable.

Note: for a series of 3rd tones, change all the former ones to 2nd tone.



- The shape of a potato looks like a horse bell and thenceforth the Chinese name was adopted.

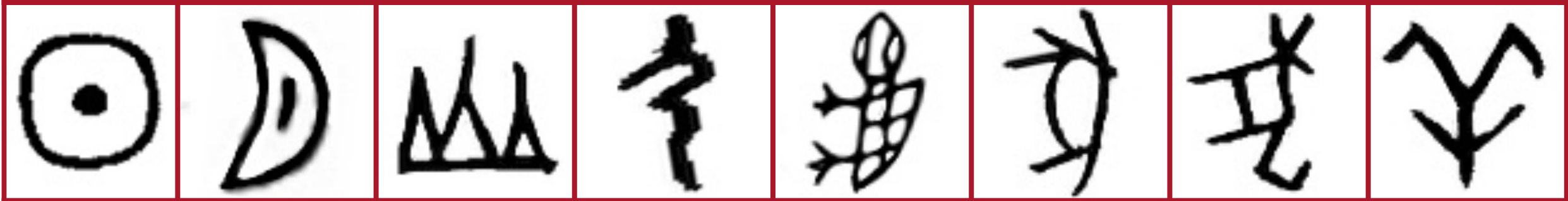
potato

马铃薯
mǎlíngshǔ

CLASSROOM EXERCISE A.3 – CHINESE CHARACTER



Can you guess the modern Chinese character from the oracle bone drawing:



人	日	山	犬	月	羊	豕	龟
<i>rén</i>	<i>rì</i>	<i>shān</i>	<i>quǎn</i>	<i>yuè</i>	<i>yáng</i>	<i>shǐ</i>	<i>guī</i>
person/ human	sun/day	hill/ mountain	dog	moon/ month	sheep	hog/ swine/ pig	turtle/ tortoise