



LESSON B.9

WRITING CHINESE CHARACTERS

写汉字 XIĚ HÀNZÌ

LESSON B.8 REVISION



2

Construct words/phrases from the below characters:

感
gǎn

戴
dài

多喝水
duō

不
bú

流
liú

打
dǎ

发
fā

勤
qín

洗手
xǐshǒu

鼻水
bíshuǐ

冒
mào

口罩
kǒuzhào

舒服
shūfú

烧
shāo

喝水
hē shuǐ

喷嚏
pēntì

CHINESE CHARACTERS VS ENGLISH WORDS



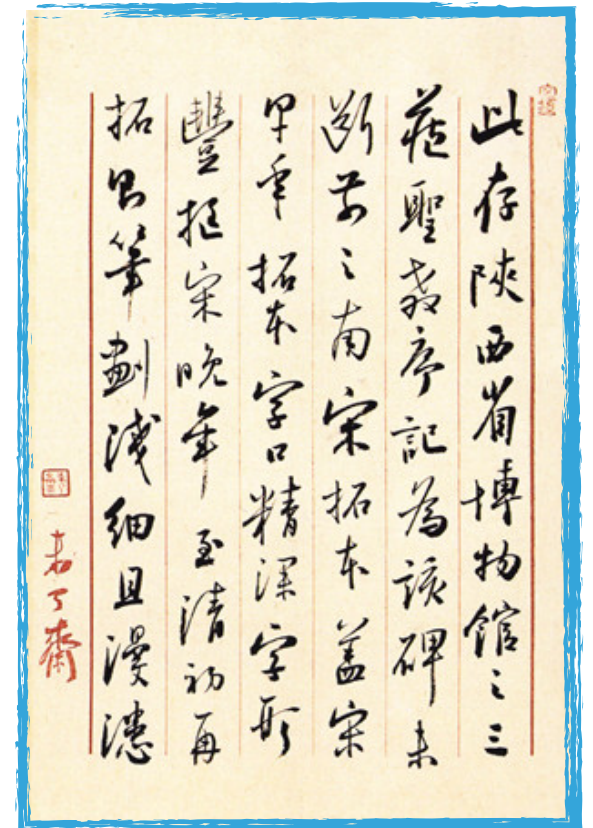
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How many characters are there?

- Altogether there are over **50,000** characters, though many are very rare.
- A comprehensive modern dictionary 字典 (zìdiǎn) will rarely list over 20,000 in use.
- An average educated Chinese person would know 4,000 - 5,000 characters.
- You would only need about 2,000 - 3,000 to be able to read a newspaper.
- English has over 170,000 words. However, combinations of Chinese characters create new meanings and generate stream of wonderful words.

Layout

- Traditionally Chinese characters have been laid out **from top to bottom** 从上到下 (cóng shàng dào xià), **from right to left** 从右到左 (cóng yòu dào zuǒ).
- However, most modern publications follow the Western way.



FOUR TREASURES OF THE STUDY

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文房四宝 *wén fáng sì bǎo*

- **Four Treasures of the Study** 文房四宝 (*wén fáng sì bǎo*) is an expression used to refer to the rice paper (xuan paper), brush, inkstick and inkstone used in Chinese calligraphy and painting. Collectively they are called 纸笔墨砚 (*zhǐ bǐ mò yàn*).
- The name stems from the time of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589 AD).
- Other "Treasures" include brush rest, brush hanger, paperweight, brush rinsing pot, water spoon, seal, and seal-ink.



Xuan Paper

宣纸
xuānzhǐ



Brush

毛笔
máobǐ



Inkstick

墨
mò



Inkstone

砚
yàn

CHINESE ORACLE BONE SCRIPT



5

- The basic Chinese writings are evolved from the oracle bone script. Over time, new characters were added to depict complex meanings.

甲骨文

jiǎgǔwén

人 rén person	男 nán man	女 nǚ woman	子 zi child	夫 fu husband	妻 qī wife	王 wáng king	口 kǒu mouth
目 mù eye	耳 ěr ear	心 xīn heart	日 rì sun	月 yuè moon	山 shān mountain	雨 yǔ rain	田 tián field
土 tǔ earth	水 shuǐ water	火 huǒ fire	貝 bèi cowrie shell	大 dà big	小 xiǎo small	上 shàng above	下 xià below
力 lì strength	中 zhōng middle	又 yòu also	好 hǎo good	肉 ròu meat	出 chū to go out	刀 dāo knife	南 nán south

CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY



- Chinese calligraphy 书法 (*shūfǎ*) has a long history and lasts about 1000 years. It can be considered as a unique **artistic** form of the Chinese culture.
- The traditional calligraphy mainly falls into five scripts as below. These styles are intrinsically linked to the Chinese history.



Seal script	Clerical script	Cursive script/ Grass script	Running script	Regular script/ Standard
篆书	隶书	草书	行书	楷书
<i>zhuànshū</i>	<i>lìshū</i>	<i>cǎoshū</i>	<i>hángshū</i>	<i>kǎishū</i>



- Like Western typography (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial), there are various Chinese typefaces used in **printing and computing**.
- Inevitably, most learners nowadays learn and practise Chinese writing based on **computer typefaces**, rather than traditional calligraphy.
- In practice, our handwriting is much free and reflective of each individual **styles** 风格 (*fēnggé*) which are highly promoted in Chinese education. An individualistic handwriting represents one's unique **character** 性格 (*xìnggé*) and artistic **taste** 品味 (*pǐnwèi*).

1. Ming or Song Typeface - on paper

- Ming typeface 明体 (*míngtǐ*) or Song typeface 宋体 (*sòngtǐ*) is mainly used to display printed Chinese characters in newspapers and books. It replicates **various thickness** of brushstroke.

汉字

2. Gothic Typeface - on screen

- Gothic typeface 黑体 (*hēitǐ*) is mainly used in computer typing and is characterized by strokes of **even thickness** and lack of decorations akin to **sans serif** styles in Western typography.
- Similar to sans-serif, Ming/Song typefaces were designed for printing, but they were also designed for **legibility**. They are commonly used in headlines, signs, and video applications.

汉字

FIND YOUR UNIQUE STYLES

- Appreciate some examples of handwriting from famous people.
- Their unique styles have been highly recognized and are popularly used for study and practice.
- <http://www.akuziti.com/mb/>



毛泽东
毛泽东书法



邓小平
邓小平手写体



孙中山
中山行书字体



柳功权
柳功权柳体



舒同
舒同毛笔字体



米芾
米芾体



启功
启功体



颜真卿
颜真卿书法



赵孟頫
赵孟頫楷书



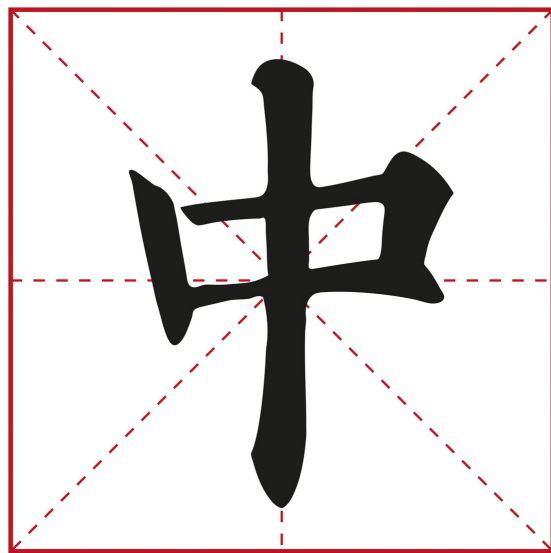
于右任
于右任书法

FIT IN THE SQUARE



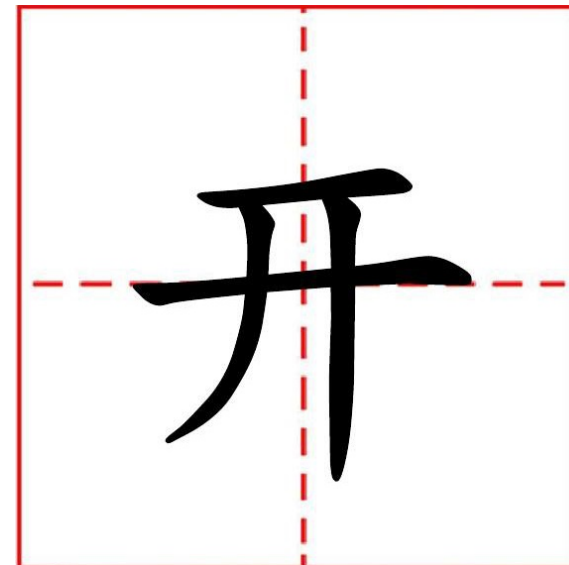
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- When you write each character, imagine you are writing it inside a **square** 方格 (*fāng gé*).
- To begin, practice on a squared paper in a grid. There are two popular grid formats (see appendix):
 1. **Rice Word Grid** 米字格 (*mǐ zì gé*) is most commonly used as Chinese calligraphy practice template. As the name suggests, the shape of the grid looks like the Chinese character for rice 米.
http://chineseprintables.com/paper/rice_A4.pdf
 2. **Field Word Grid** 田字格 (*tián zì gé*), as you might expect, the corresponding Chinese character 田 represents the rice field with grid.
http://chineseprintables.com/paper/field_A4.pdf
- Each character needs to be **evenly spaced**, **balanced** and fit into **equal-sized** segments. Some characters look **symmetrical**.



Rice Word Grid:

Middle 中
zhōng



Field Word Grid:

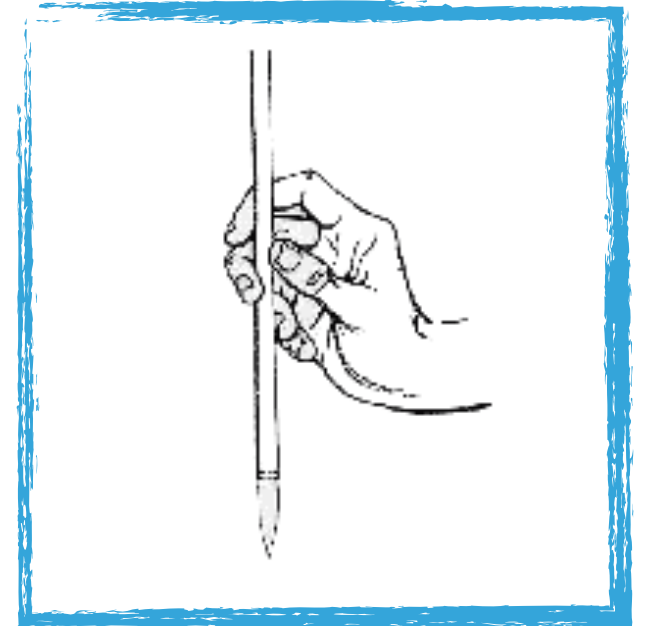
Open 开
kāi

Appendix – Holding a Chinese Calligraphy Brush

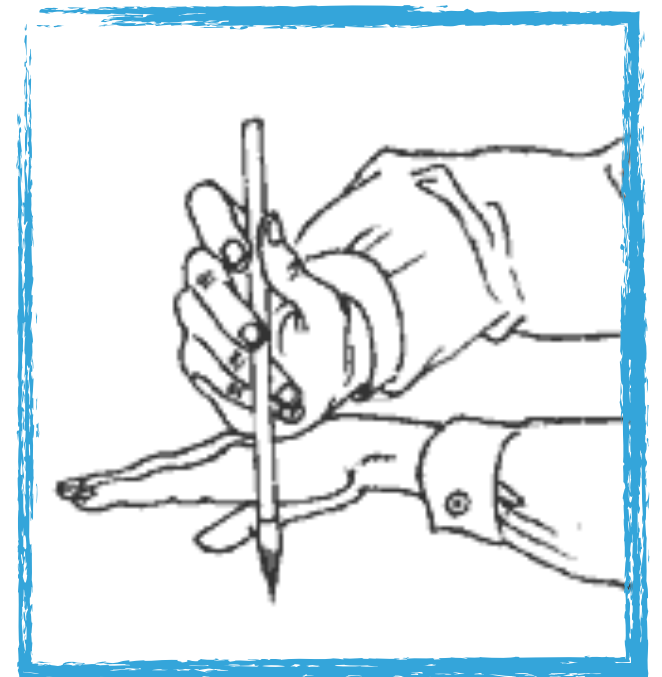


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- To practice Chinese calligraphy, one must learn the proper way of holding the **brush** 毛笔 (*máobǐ*):
 1. Grasp it firmly between the thumb and first two fingers. Keep the ring finger (the fourth) lightly behind the brush as a balance.
 2. Keep the brush in a **vertical position** 垂直位置 (*chuízhí wèizhì*).
 3. Keep your elbow above the table.
- Besides the **fingers** 手指 (*shǒuzhǐ*), one must learn how to use the **wrist** 手腕 (*shǒuwàn*) and **elbow** 肘部 (*zhǒu bù*) while writing. Use the wrist to manipulate the tip of the brush and the elbow for the various directions of brush strokes.
- By holding the brush strictly upright, you can use the entire **tip** of the brush when you write rather than just the **side** of it as when you hold it like a pen or pencil.
- A **brushstroke** 笔触 (*bǐchù*) can reveal the individuality and style of the person.
- Chinese artists often apply calligraphic styles and techniques in **painting** 绘画 (*huìhuà*)



Holding the brush upright



Supported wrist method



jīn bù huàn

"Not to be exchanged even for gold."

What does it mean?

- Describe something very precious, even beyond the value of gold. Literally it is priceless, not for all the tea in China!

How is it used?

- This idiom is used to describe a beloved item or an honourable deed that is beyond any measurement. The example here is an **inkstick**.



浪子回头金不换

(làngzǐ huítóu jīn bù huàn)

- This is an extended idiom: "A prodigal son returned home is worth more than gold."
- It is rare when someone who has gone astray turns over a new leaf. Let's celebrate it with open arms.

Gold

金
jīn

No

不
bù

Exchange

换
huàn

SONG – HAPPY BIRTHDAY



12

<https://youtu.be/ckjD6YuXOy0?feature=shared>

birthday cake

生日蛋糕

Shēngrì dàngāo

birthday present

生日礼物

shēngrì lǐwù

birthday party

生日派对

shēngrì pàiduì

Wish you happy birthday

祝你生日快乐

zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè

Wish you happiness and good health

祝你幸福，祝你健康

zhù nǐ xìngfú, zhù nǐ jiànkāng

Wish you a bright future

祝你前途光明

zhù nǐ qiántú guāngmíng

Have a warm family

有个温暖家庭

yǒu gè wēnnuǎn jiā tíng

CLASSROOM EXERCISE B.9



13

Write your name in Chinese.

A 2x16 grid of squares. Each square is divided into four triangles by a horizontal line, a vertical line, and a diagonal line from the top-left corner to the bottom-right corner. The triangles are shaded in a repeating pattern: the top-left triangle is light blue, the top-right triangle is light green, the bottom-left triangle is light orange, and the bottom-right triangle is light pink.

A 2x10 grid of squares. Each square is divided into four triangles by a horizontal line, a vertical line, and a diagonal line from the top-left corner to the bottom-right corner. The triangles are shaded in a repeating pattern: the top-left and bottom-right triangles are light gray, while the top-right and bottom-left triangles are white.

A 2x10 grid of squares. Each square is divided into four triangles by a horizontal line, a vertical line, and a diagonal line from the top-left corner to the bottom-right corner. The triangles are oriented such that the top-left triangle is shaded in a light gray color, while the other three triangles (top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right) are white.