

# LESSON 1 - INTRODUCTIONS

## OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Greet someone, and recognize a greeting
- Give their name, and ask for someone else's name, and recognize when someone is giving their name
- Give their age, and ask for someone else's age, and recognize when someone is giving their age
- Say goodbye, and recognize a farewell
  
- Recite and recognize numbers 1-10
- Describe one way in which sentences in Chinese are similar to sentences in English
- Describe one way in which questions in Chinese are different from questions in English
  
- Correctly recognize and pronounce the six vowels and 4 tones of Mandarin
- Correctly identify the written forms (in pinyin) of the six vowels and 4 tones of Mandarin
  
- Identify, recognize, and draw the héng stroke and three characters that use this stroke (yī, èr, sān)
- Describe the top to bottom rule
  
- Define dialect. Name some dialects of Chinese. Identify Mandarin as the dialect learned in this class.

## DIALOGUE:

### nǐ hǎo! Meeting a new friend

A: 你好！我叫(\_\_\_\_)。你叫什么名字？  
nǐ hǎo! wǒ jiào (\_\_\_\_). nǐ jiào shén me míng zi?  
Hello! My name is (\_\_\_\_). What's your name?

B: 你好！我叫(\_\_\_\_)。  
nǐ hǎo! wǒ jiào (\_\_\_\_).  
Hello, my name is (\_\_\_\_).



A: 你几岁？  
nǐ jǐ suì?  
How old are you?

B: 我五岁。你几岁？  
wǒ wǔ suì. nǐ jǐ suì?  
I am five years old. How old are you?








A: 我七岁。再见！  
wǒ qī suì. zài jiàn!  
I am seven years old. Goodbye!





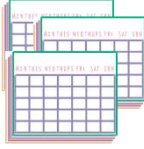
B: 再见！  
zài jiàn!  
Goodbye!

## VOCABULARY

					
我	你	你	见	好	你好
wǒ	nǐ	jiào	jiàn	hǎo	nǐ hǎo
I	you	call	see	good	hello

			
再	再见	名字	什么
zài	zài jiàn	míng zì	shén me
again	see you later	name	what

						
一	二	三	四	五	六	七
yī	èr	sān	sì	wǔ	liù	qī
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

				
八	九	十	几	岁
bā	jiǔ	shí	jǐ	suì
8	9	10	how many	years old

## GRAMMAR & COMPARISONS

Chinese and English are really a lot alike. Just as in English, Chinese is a subject-verb-object language. This means that the person the sentence is about is usually at the beginning, then what that person is doing, then what they are talking about or doing something to comes at the end.

SUBJECT:	VERB:	OBJECT:
The person the sentence is about	What that person is doing	What they are talking about

But Chinese is different from English in some ways, too. In English, question words usually come at the beginning of the sentence. We say, "*What* is your name?" "*How* old are you?" In Chinese, question words come at the same place in the sentence as the answers to those questions. For example:

你 叫 什 么 名 字?

nǐ jiào **shén me** míng zi?

you call (are called) **what** name? (not: what name are you called)

我 叫 (\_\_\_\_\_).

wǒ jiào (\_\_\_\_\_).

I call (am called) (\_\_\_\_\_).

你 几 岁?

nǐ **jǐ** suì?

you (are) **how many** years old? (not: how many years old are you)

我 五 岁.

wǒ **wǔ** suì.

I (am) **five** years old.

Another difference between Chinese and English is that in English the verb "to be" (which we often use as am, are or is) is often used to show that something is happening now (in the "present tense"). Chinese leaves out the word for "to be" in many sentences where we would include it in English. For example:

我 五 岁.

wǒ **wǔ** suì.

I (**am**) five years old.

We will learn the Chinese word for "to be" in the next lesson.

## READING AND WRITING

Like English, Chinese has vowel sounds and consonant sounds. *Consonants* are the "hard" sounds you make with parts of your mouth closed, usually at the beginnings or ends of syllables. *Vowels* are the parts of a syllable that you make with your mouth open, so the air comes through and is shaped by your mouth. Chinese also has something called *tones*, which are fairly common in Asian and African languages, but not used in European languages like English. We will learn about vowels and tones in this lesson.

In the People's Republic of China, children learn to read and write *pinyin*, which uses an alphabet like English to show how to pronounce words. Pinyin spelling is more regular than English spelling. For example, in English, wood and would are spelled differently but are pronounced the same. In pinyin, they would both be spelled exactly the same way they sound. But pinyin sounds are not exactly like the English sounds for the same letters, and there are some extra letters. For example, English has five vowels: a, e, i, o, and u.

Chinese has six vowels:

a	o	e	i	u	ü
---	---	---	---	---	---

Listen to the teacher or the CD or CDROM pronounce these vowels. How are they similar to or different from the vowels in English?

**a** is like **bar**

**o** is like **bob** (or **bawl**... think of a Bronx accent)

**e** is like **her**, but without the "r", or the sound in **book**, but without rounding your lips

**i** is like the sound in **beet**

**u** is like **boot**

**ü** is a sound that English doesn't have. To make this sound, make the "u" sound, but then stretch your lips out so they are shaped the way they are for the "i" sound. This will be easier after you practice it.

(Vowels can also be combined to form "diphthong vowels." These will be discussed in a later lesson.)

Chinese also has *tones*. Tones describe a kind of melody that each syllable has in Chinese. This means that whether a word is said with a "rising" or "falling" tone can affect its

meaning. English uses tones too, in sentences. Read these English sentences out loud and listen to how they sound:

You are going to the store.  
You are going to the store?  
You are going to the store!  
You are going to the store....

In Chinese, the tones can affect whole sentences, but they are also part of each word. Consider these examples:

妈	麻	马	骂	吗
mā	má	mǎ	mà	ma
mother	hemp	horse	scold	Question Mark

These are all different words, not variations of the same word. They are as different in meaning as "hat" and "bat" in English, or "hat" and "hot." It is very important to be able to hear and say the tones correctly in Mandarin Chinese. This can be done with some practice. Remember, very young children learn to do this in China everyday! You can, too.

Tones are written in pinyin by putting a "tone mark" above the vowel in the word. Mandarin Chinese has four tones:

**ā** First Tone or High Tone - a high, even tone that doesn't go down or up

**á** Second Tone or Rising Tone - this sounds like a question in English

**ǎ** Third Tone or Falling-Rising Tone - like the way you might pronounce "maybe"

**à** Fourth Tone or Falling Tone - This sounds like an exclamation in English.

There is also a "fifth" tone which is "unstressed." This means that the word with that tone is usually short and doesn't really have a tone of its own. No tone mark is written for an unstressed syllable.

Listen to your teacher or the CD or CDROM pronounce the vowels with all four tones. Try to pronounce each vowel with its tone.

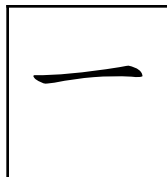
ā	á	ǎ	à
ō	ó	ǒ	ò
ē	é	ě	è
ī	í	ǐ	ì
ū	ú	ǔ	ù
ǖ	ǘ	ǚ	ǜ

## CHINESE HANZI CHARACTERS

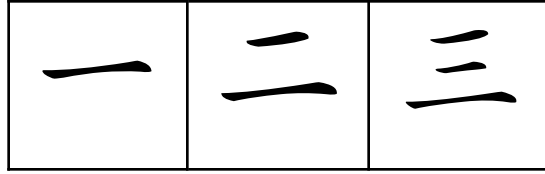
Although Chinese children learn pinyin when they are young, older Chinese children and adults don't use pinyin. Instead, they learn *hanzi* characters, one for each word-syllable in Chinese. To read a newspaper, an adult needs to know about 3000 hanzi! That probably seems like a lot, but each hanzi character is made of smaller parts, called *wan* or *radicals*. Radicals help the reader know the meaning and sometimes the pronunciation of the hanzi character. If you know the radicals, you can often figure out a new character you've never seen before, just as you can often read a word in English that you've never seen before. There are about 200 radicals, but many fewer than that are usually used. This makes learning the characters much easier.

We will not try to learn all the characters in these lessons. Like children in China, we will learn pinyin first. But we will also learn the basic radicals and some characters, and we will learn how characters go together, so it will be easier to learn more characters later. We will start by learning the basic *strokes* that make up the radicals and characters. Think of the strokes as the smallest letters of the Chinese alphabet. They don't have meaning by themselves, but they tell you how to read and write the characters.

The first stroke we will learn is *héng*. This is a plain horizontal stroke, drawn left to right:

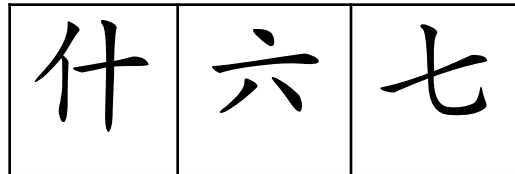


Using this stroke, we can already make three characters from this lesson:



Notice how each character fills a square space of the same size.

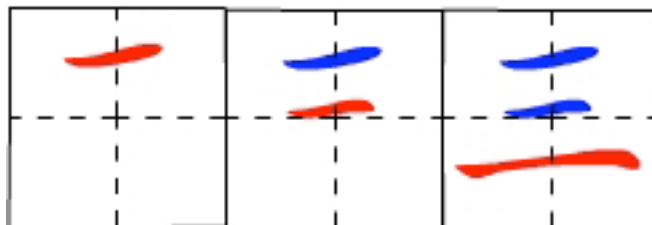
The héng stroke also appears in many other characters we have seen in this lesson:



Chinese characters are very graceful and beautiful. Although the oldest characters were scratched on tortoiseshells, for most of Chinese history they have been written with a brush and ink. Even though today most Chinese people write with pencils or pens, they still learn to write with a brush in school. Especially beautiful writing is called *calligraphy*. Chinese brush calligraphy is a fine art, and people who are especially good at it can become famous in China, as artists.

Part of writing correctly in Chinese, whether you are using a brush or a pencil, is writing the strokes in the correct order. Think of English spelling. You could have all the right letters, but if you get them in the wrong order, no one will be able to read what you write! In Chinese, if you write the strokes in the wrong order, people may be able to guess what you mean, but the strokes won't flow together right, and they will look strange. The end of each stroke points toward the beginning of the next stroke. Learning to write the strokes properly will help you remember which stroke comes next in a character. The order of the strokes also follows a few rules, which are easy to remember.

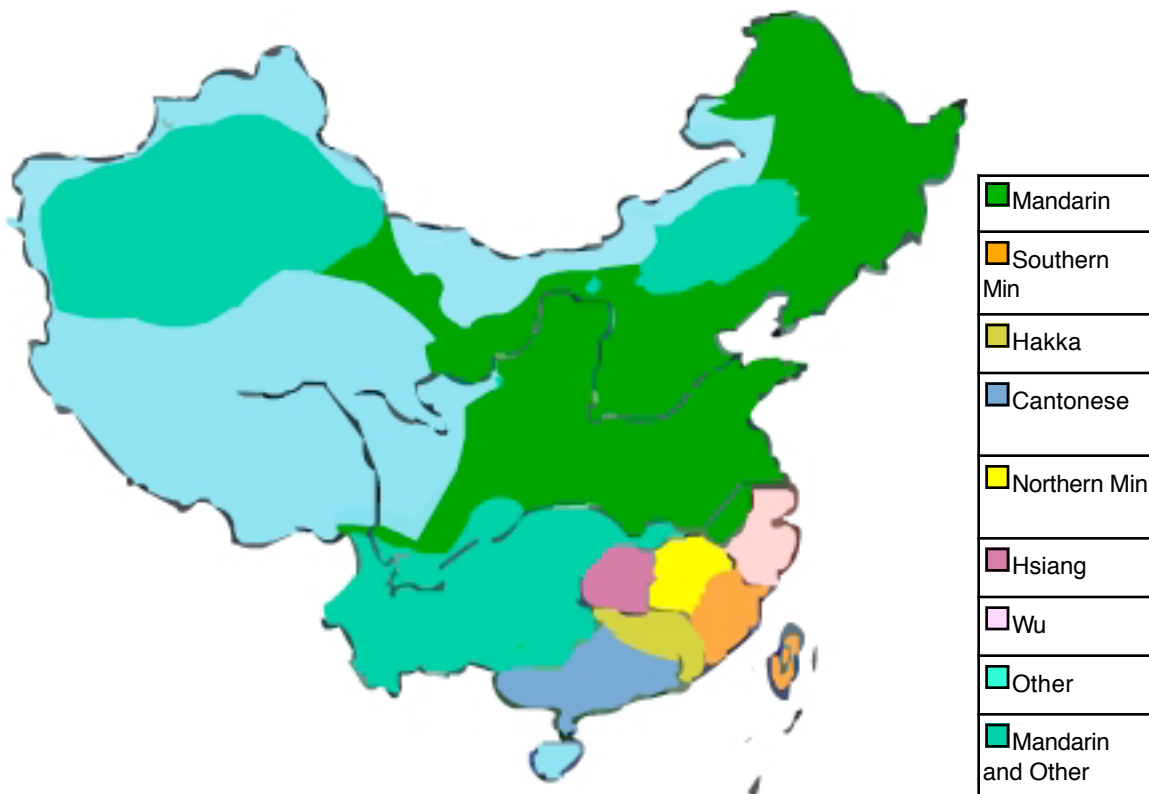
The first rule we will learn is: Top before Bottom. This rule tells us how to write characters like èr 二 and sān 三:



Practice writing these characters using the correct stroke order.

## CULTURAL CONNECTION

China is a very old and large country. Although the writing is the same everywhere in the People's Republic of China, not everyone speaks the same way. There are different *dialects* of Chinese. A dialect is a special way many people speak a language, which makes it different from the way other people speak the language. The dialect can change the way some words are pronounced, or even which words are used. In English, American English and British English are two relatively similar dialects. Chinese has many more dialects, and some of them are very different from each other. Different dialects are spoken in different parts of China.



Most dialects in Chinese are so different from each other, people who speak one dialect cannot understand other dialects. In this class, we are learning Mandarin Chinese, which is the dialect of Chinese which was originally spoken in the Northeastern part of China, near Beijing, and is now spoken throughout China as the official language of the People's Republic of China. In this part of China, this dialect is called pǔtōnghuà 普通话, the language of all the people. In Taiwan Mandarin is called Guoyu, and in Singapore, Huayu.

## PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

### PRACTICE DIALOGUE

Practice saying hello and goodbye to people you know. Teach other people how to say hello and goodbye! Practice asking someone how old they are, and telling someone how old you are. How old are the people in your family?

### PRACTICE YOUR NUMBERS

Look for things with numbers on them, e.g. your phone number, house address, numbers on mailboxes, etc. Every time you see a number, think of the Chinese word for that number. Say the word out loud.

### PLAY CARD GAMES

Play "go fish", but take out the "face" cards, and use the Chinese names for the numbers whenever you want a card. E.g.: Do you have a sān?

### VOWEL AND TONE wǔ ge

Use the 24 vowel and tone stickers provided, and the blank bingo board in lesson 1 of your work book, to make your own bingo or "wǔ ge" (five things) game board. Make sure to mix up the stickers before putting them on the squares! Listen to the teacher or the CDROM and mark each vowel-tone that you hear with a token (like a penny). The first one to get five in a row wins!

### OTHER PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

Listen to the CD or CDROM and practice vowels with tones

sing "Ni Hao" song from "Sing 'n Learn Chinese"

Practice writing the Chinese characters you have learned (yī, èr, sān, or more characters for second-year students)

## ENRICHMENT

Making numbers past 10 is easy. Just put the "10" first, then the number to add to it, like this:

十一	十二	十三	十四	十五	十六	十七	十八	十九
shí yī	shí èr	shí sān	shí sì	shí wǔ	shí liù	shí qī	shí bā	shí jiǔ
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19

Make numbers like 20, 30, and 40 by putting the number before the 10. These two rules work together, too:

二十	三十	四十	二十一	二十二	二十三
èr shí	sān shí	sì shí	èr shí yī	èr shí èr	èr shí sān
20	30	40	21	22	23

This works up to the number 99. Then, you need a new character: 百 bǎi. This character means 100. Can you figure out how to use it?

### STROKE ORDERS FOR OTHER CHARACTERS IN THIS LESSON:

### SONGS:

"Ni Hao" song from "Sing 'n Learn Chinese"

### BOOKS:

My First Chinese Words: #4: 你几岁? nǐ jǐ suì?

### WEBSITES:

<http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/chinlng2.html>

Interesting overview of dialects and writing.

<http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/1906/dialects.html>  
Dialect map of American English.

<http://www.sungwh.freemove.co.uk/chinese/ch-intro.htm>  
More good information about dialects

<http://www.asiawind.com/hakka/language.htm>  
Very interesting discussion of Hakka and has a couple of nice tables of equivalents of words from different dialects.

<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/profiles/profm02.htm>  
Profile of Mandarin. Has map showing where Mandarin is spoken.  
Has interesting analysis of grammar.