

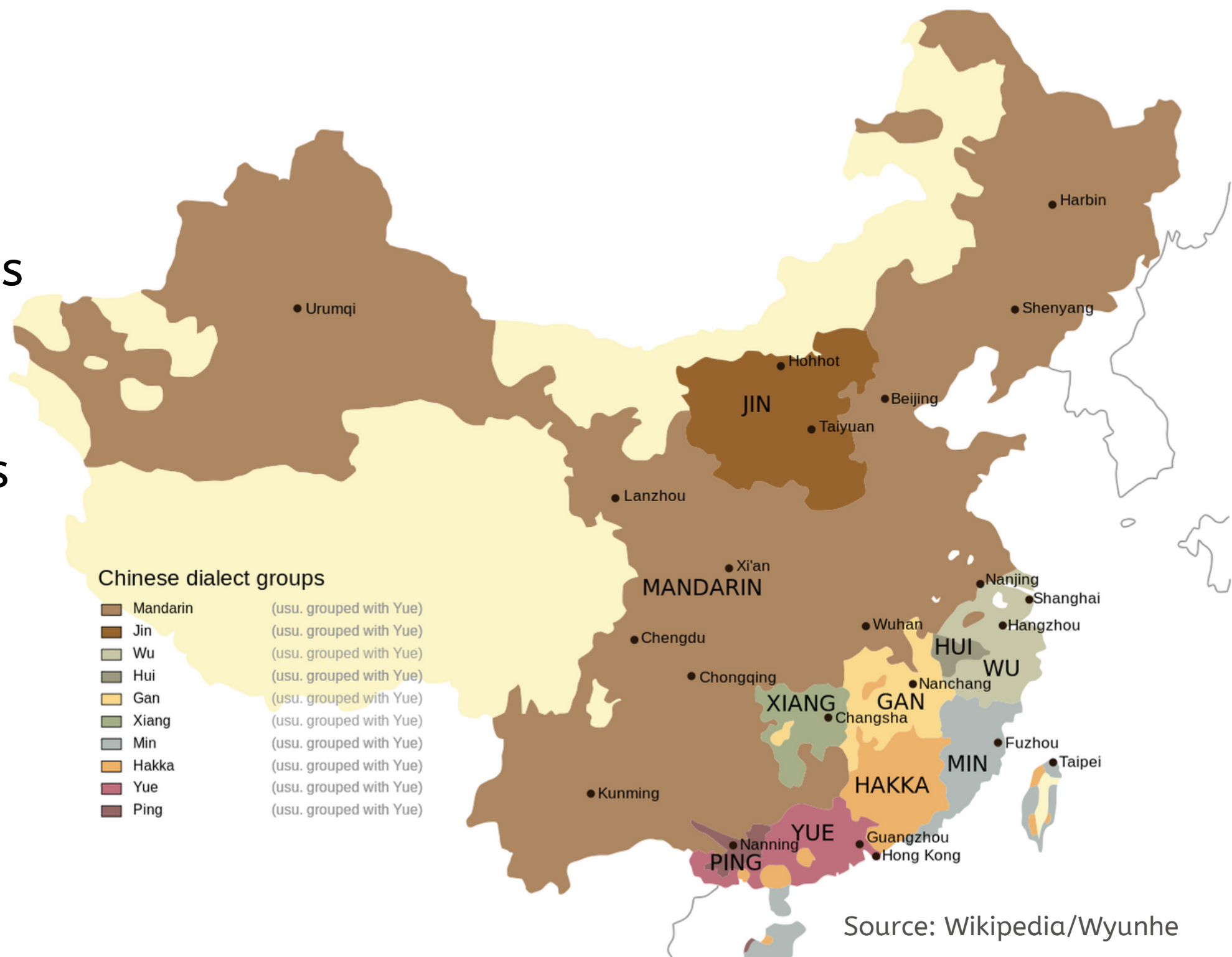
LANGUAGE TOOLKIT CHINESE



TOP TIP

Choose a Dialect: Mandarin is the most widely spoken dialect which can be a good starting point. Other dialects include Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka etc.

Here is a map of the language distribution of China. Please note that although there are many dialects in China, the official language is Mandarin. People in most areas can communicate in Mandarin.

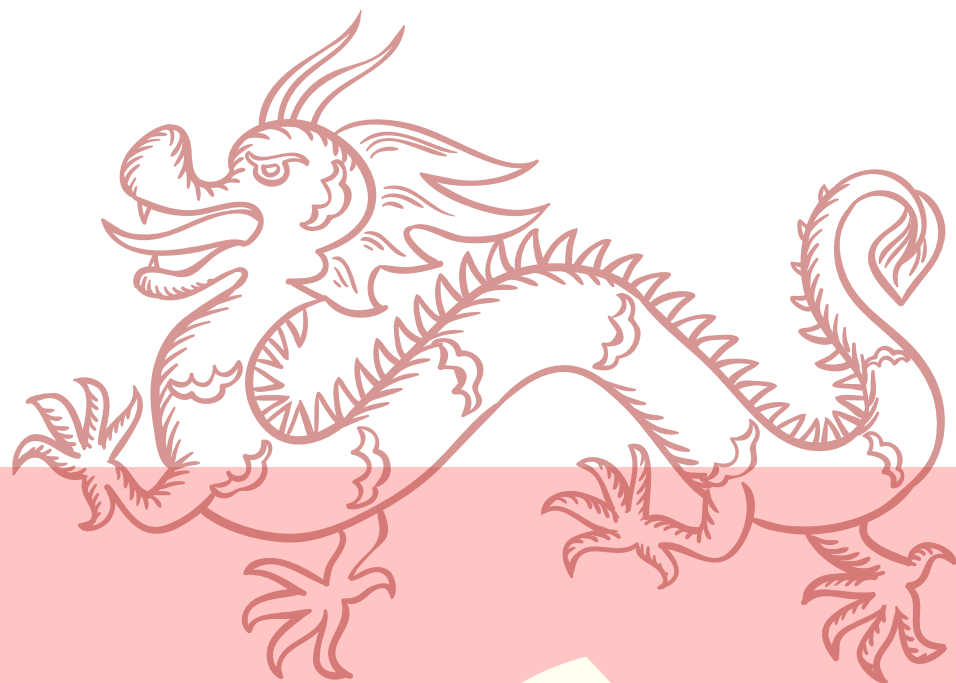


汉字 vs 漢字

Simplified Chinese

Traditional Chinese

Source: lindamandarin.com.sg



CHARACTERS

There are two Chinese writing systems: Simplified and Traditional. While many of the characters are the same, it is effective to learn one of them first to avoid confusion.

Decide which you would prefer to learn first with resources such as this [webpage](#) and this [blogpost](#).



LEARN PINYIN!

汉语拼音字母表

声母表 (23个)

b	p	m	f	d	t	n	l
g	k	h	j	q	x	zh	ch
sh	r	z	c	s	y	w	

韵母表 (24个)

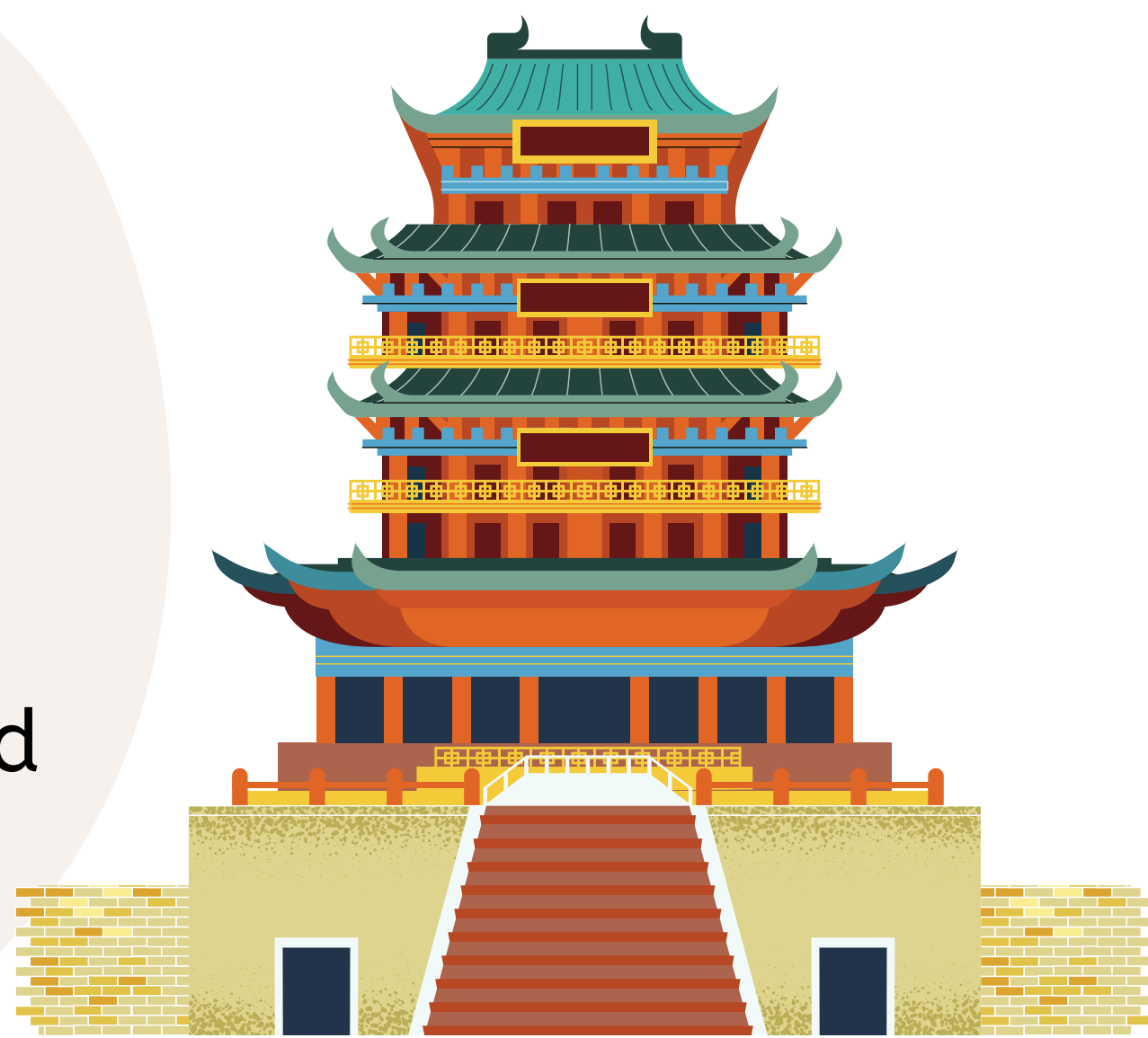
a	o	e	i	u	ü	ai	ei
ui	ao	ou	iu	ie	üe	er	an
en	in	un	ün	ang	eng	ing	ong

整体认读音节 (16个)

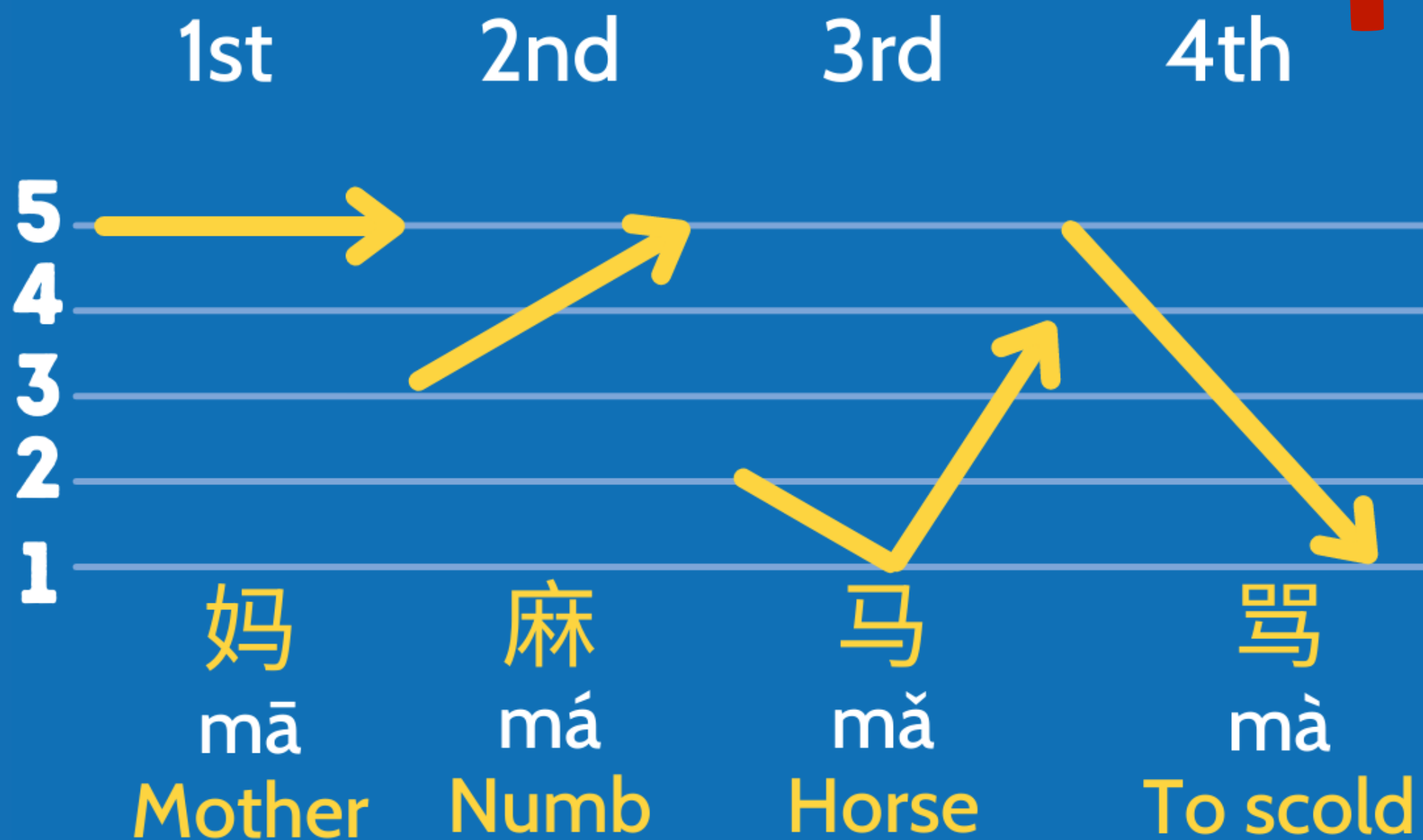
zhi	chi	shi	ri	zi	ci	si	wu
yi	yu	ye	yue	yuan	yin	yun	ying

Source: Wikipedia/下载之家

Start with the basics.
Pinyin is the Romanisation
system for transcribing
Mandarin sounds
into the Latin alphabet.
Here is a guide to Pinyin and
here is a Pinyin chart
with audio.



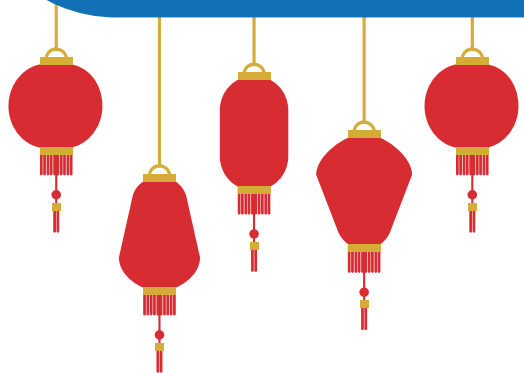
LEARN TONES!



NOTE: there is also a 5th neutral tone

Source: tl-chengdu.com

It is important to learn how to pronounce tones correctly as they can change the meaning of words.



Master the tones with Youtube videos such as [this one](#) and [this one](#).

When watching Chinese TV or movies or listening to podcasts, practice mimicking native speakers. Learn more about this technique [here](#).

It may be useful to speak slowly and really exaggerate the tones and later work on speeding up your speech.

Learn RADICALS!

Radicals are a rough equivalent of a Chinese alphabet. They are used to index the characters for Chinese dictionaries. They are also the building blocks of Chinese characters and often reflect some common semantics or phonetic characteristics. Knowing common radicals can help you learn new Chinese characters.

- [This webpage](#) provides a useful guide to learning radicals.
- The app Drops has many lessons on recognising radicals and learning their stroke order (meaning the order in which you write the character).

一 yīhéng One	丨 yīshù Downstroke	丿 yīpiē Slash	丶 yīdiǎn Dot	乙 yǐ Beak	2	二 èr Two	十 shí Ten	厂 hǎn Cliff	匚 fāng/xī Basket	冫 dāo Knife
刀 dāo Knife	卜 bǔ Divination	冂 jiōng Borders	亻 rén Person	八 bā Eight	儿 ěr Legs	几 jǐ Table	匕 bǐ Spoon	勹 bāo Wrap	冫 tū Ice	宀 mǐ Cover
凵 kǎn Container	卩 jié Seal	冢 fù Mound	邑 yì Town	力 lì Power	又 yòu Right-hand	厶 sī Privacy	彳 chī Stride	3	干 gān Shield	土 tǔ Earth
扌 shǒu Hand	艹 cǎo Grass	寸 cùn Thumb/Inch	冫 gōng Two-hands	大 dà Big	九 jiǔ Lame	戈 gē Shoot	小 xiǎo Small	口 kǒu Mouth	口 wéi Enclosure	山 shān Mountain
巾 jīn Scarf	川 chuān River	彳 chì Step	彡 shān Bristle	犾 qūn Dog	夕 xī Evening	饣 shí Food	斗 dòu Splinter	广 guǎng Shelter	门 mén Gate	冰 bīng Water
忄 xīn Heart	宀 mián Roof	辶 chuò Walk	丩 jū Snout	尸 shī Corpse	己 jǐ Self	弓 gōng Bow	孑 zǐ Child	中 zhōng Sprout	女 nǚ Woman	纟 sī Silk
马 mǎ Horse	幺 yāo Little	4	王 wáng King	韦 wéi Leather	老 lǎo Old	木 mù Tree	歹 dǎi Death/Bad	车 chē Car	牙 yá Fang	戈 gē Halberd
止 zhǐ Stop	支 zhī Tap	日 rì Sun	日 yuē Say	贝 bèi Shell	见 jiàn See	牜 niú Cow	毛 máo Fur	气 qì Steam	文 wén Tap	斤 jīn Axe
户 hù Door	父 fù Father	月 yuè/ròu Moon/Meat	欠 qiǎn Yawn	风 fēng Wind	彳 shù Lance	文 wén Literature	方 fāng Square	火 huǒ Fire	斗 dòu Dipper	巾 jīn Brush
毋 wú Do not	5	石 shí Stone	龙 lóng Dragon	业 yè Business	目 mù Eye	田 tián Field	皿 mǐn Dish	四 sì Net	生 shēng Life	矢 shǐ Arrow
白 bái White	瓜 guā Melon	用 yòng Use	鸟 niǎo Bird	疒 nè Sickness	立 lì Stand	穴 xué Cavern	衤 yī Clothes	疋 pǐ Cloth	皮 pí Skin	矛 máo Spear
耒 lèi Plough	耳 ěr Ear	臣 chén Minister	西 xī Cover	西 xī West	页 yè Page	虍 hū Tiger	虫 chóng Insect	缶 fǒu Jar	舌 shé Tongue	竹 zhú Bamboo
血 xuè Blood	舟 zhōu Boat	羊 yáng Sheep	里 lǐ Village	足 zú Foot	身 shēn Body	采 cǎi Divide	7	麦 mài Wheat	走 zǒu Walk	赤 chì Red
辰 chén Morning	豕 shǐ Swine	鹵 lǔ Salt	里 lǐ Village	足 zú Foot	身 shēn Body	采 cǎi Divide	谷 gǔ Valley	豸 zhì Cat	角 jiǎo Horn	8
其 qí Clear	雨 yǔ Rain	齿 chǐ Tooth	隹 zhuī Small bird	鱼 yú Fish	9	革 gé Rawhide	骨 gǔ Bone	鬼 guǐ Ghost	音 yīn Sound	10+
麻 má Hemp	鹿 lù Deer	黑 hēi Black	鼠 shǔ Rat	鼻 bí Nose						

Simplified Radicals Chart
MandarinPoster.com

READING

Once you learn pinyin, you can start working on recognising characters with these reading resources:

- [Mandarin Bean](#): simple texts with both pinyin and simplified Chinese
- [Chinese Reading Practice](#): short stories and fables in pinyin and simplified Chinese, with English translations and useful vocabulary lists alongside.

APPS

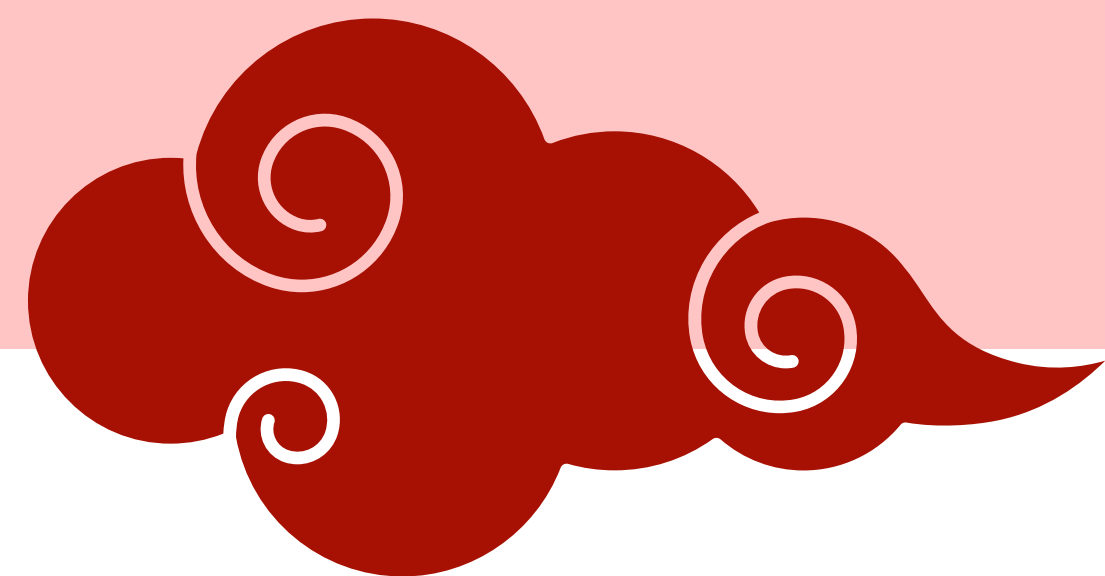
- **Duolingo** offers a beginner-level Chinese course for free based on your purpose where you can have access to learn basic words daily to achieve the goals set up.
- **Pleco** is a Chinese language reference and learning app that is mainly designed for looking up unknown words by interactive technologies.
- **HelloChinese** is a game-based Chinese learning app with a bite-sized curriculum from all aspects: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Vocabulary, and Grammar.
- **Drops** is an app that teaches you new vocabulary, how to recognise many foundational Chinese words and learn stroke order
- **ChineseSkill** - an app that is a lot like Duolingo but is specifically for learning Chinese. Is particularly useful for learning characters once you recognise pinyin.



YOUTUBE

Youtube videos can be a great source for beginners. Here are some learner-specific channels we recommend:

- **ChineseFor.Us**
- **Grace Mandarin Chinese**
- **Slow & Clear Chinese**
- **Comprehensible Chinese**
- **Mandarin Click** - stories told in slow chinese



MUSIC

Listening to music in Chinese can be a great way to become familiar with how the language sounds. Here are some artists to check out:

- **Jay Chou 周杰倫**
- **Faye Wong**
- **JJ Lin**
- **Dino Lee**
- **Eric Chou**
- **FTBOYS**

Click [here](#) to check out a Spotify playlist too



FILMS

Familiarise yourself with Chinese culture by watching movies. Use the Chrome web extension [Netflix Dual subtitle for learning languages](#) for watching Chinese-language movies on Netflix with English and Mandarin subtitles.

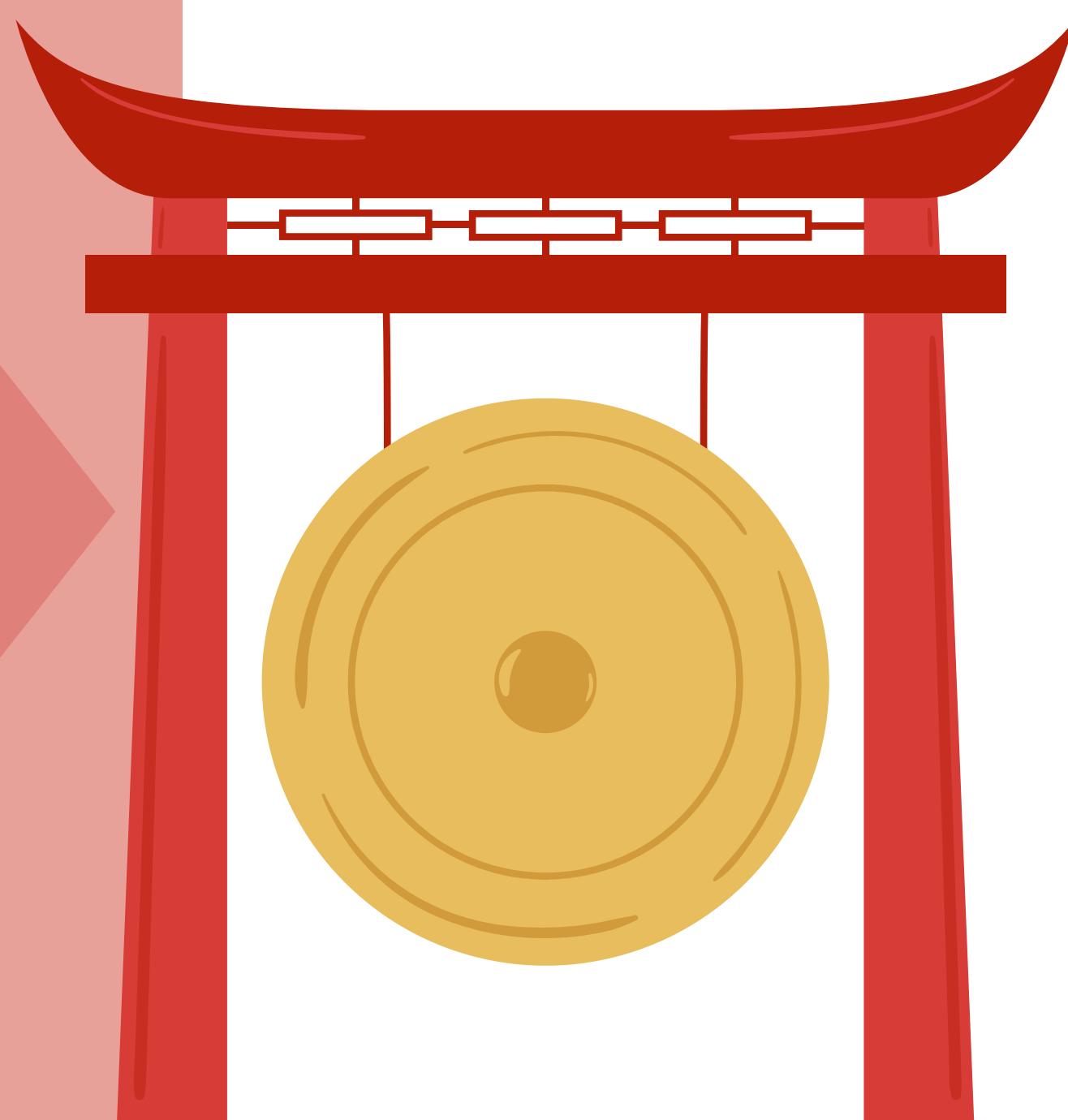
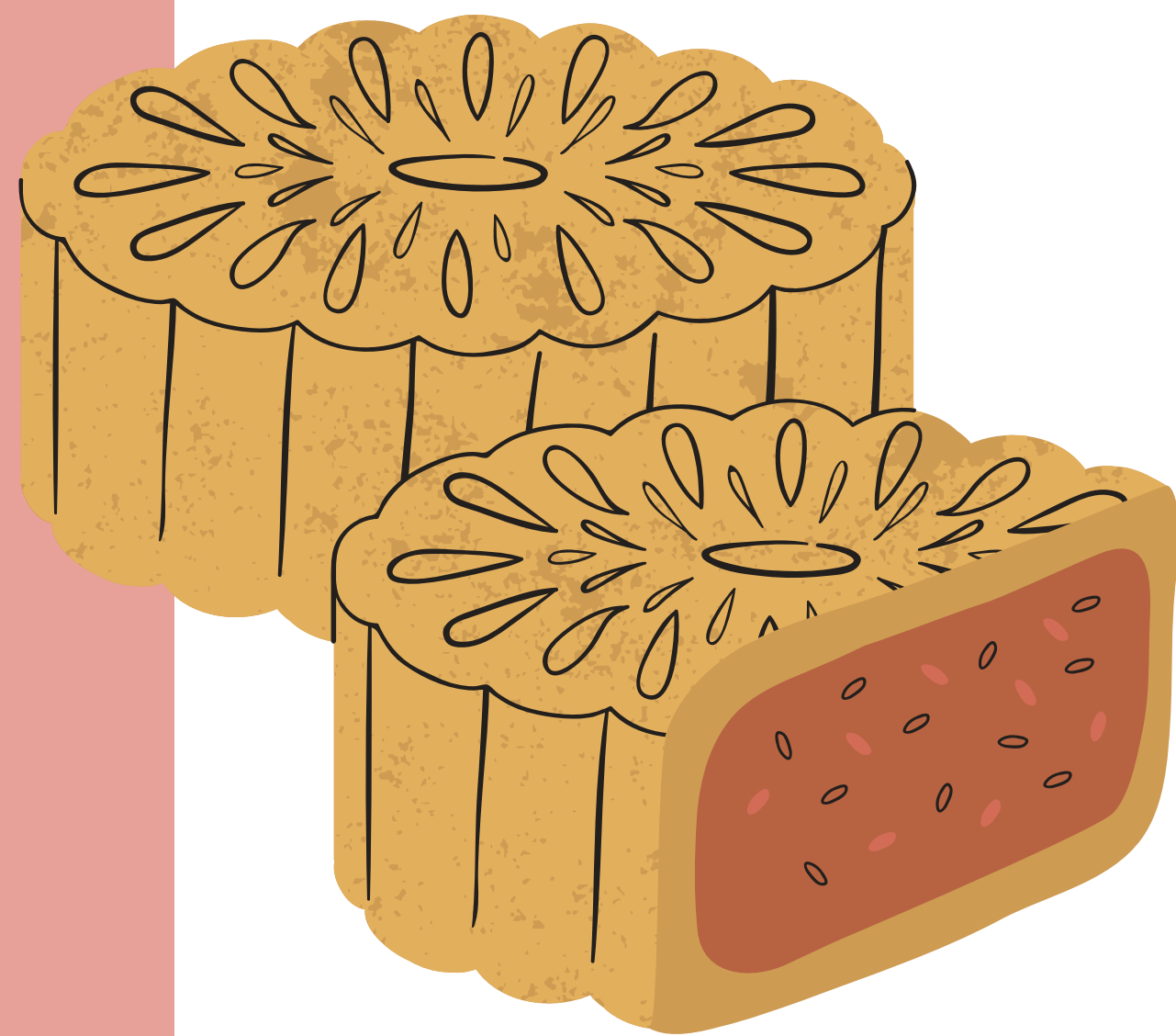
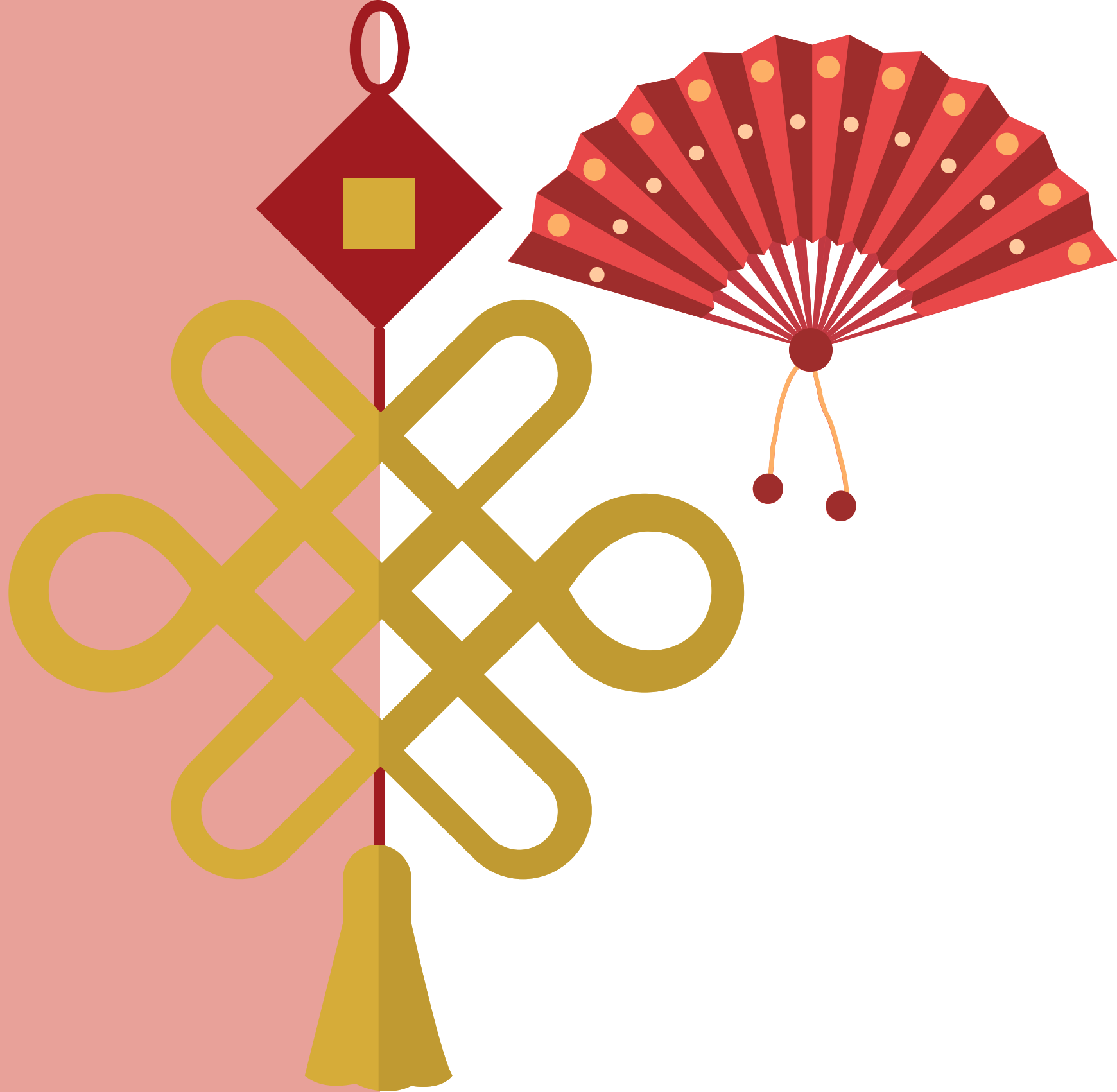
Here are some movies we recommend:

- **Eat Drink Man Woman** (1994)
- **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon** (2000)
- **You Are the Apple of My Eye** (2011)
- **Our Times** (2015)
- **The Wandering Earth** (2019)
- **The Farewell** (2019)



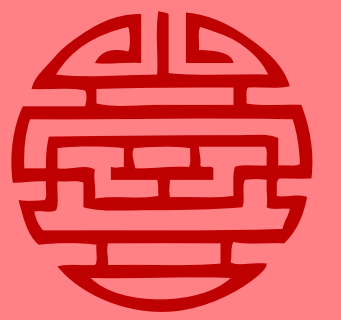
Chinese classical literature is an important part of Chinese culture. As you advance as a learner, check out these texts:

- **Water margin** 《水浒传》
- **Dream of the red chamber** 《红楼梦》
- **Journey to the west** 《西游记》
- **Romance of the three kingdoms** 《三国演义》





CONTEMPORARY MEDIA & CULTURE



From Web Novels to 动画 (Chinese Animation) to C-Drama's, the modern Chinese media landscape offers language learners lots of options to learn whilst having fun. Here are some more of our recommendations:

WEB NOVELS

- **墨香铜臭 (Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation):** A famous fantasy novel series also available in hardcopy, 动画 & C-Drama forms!
- **香蜜沉沉烬如霜 (Heavy Sweetness Ash-Like Frost):** Fantasy-romance. Also a C-drama adaptation!

ANIMATION

- **时光代理人/Link Click:** Science-Fiction/Mystery Series
- **天官赐福 (Heaven Official's Blessing):** Fantasy (仙侠) Series.
- **万圣街/All Saints Street:** Slice of life-Contemporary fantasy series

C-DRAMAS

- **三生三世十里桃花/Eternal Love:** fantasy/romance series
- **夏至未至/Rush to the Dead Summer:** Coming of Age/romance

Social Media

To truly immerse yourself in contemporary Chinese media, trends, and memes, try your hand at various different platforms such as:

- **小红书 (Xiaohongshu):** Instagram/E-commerce platform
- **微博 (Weibo):** Twitter-like platform
- **知乎 (Zhihu):** Reddit/Quora-like
- **bilibili:** Youtube equivalent



Other Tips & Tricks

1. Learning your 汉字 (Characters)

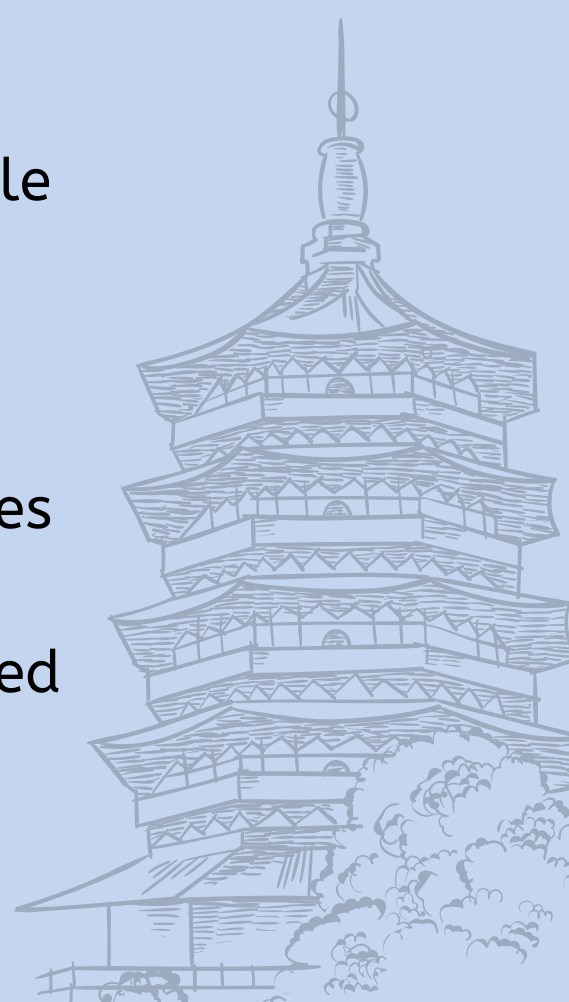
Whenever you come across characters you're unfamiliar use an online dictionary/software like **Pleco** to draw out the characters on your phone to find out their meaning & pronunciation!

It also helps to keep a little stack of physical or digital flashcards you can carry around to help the memorisation process. On desktop, try out spaced repetition programmes like **Anki**!

2. Chinese Grammar

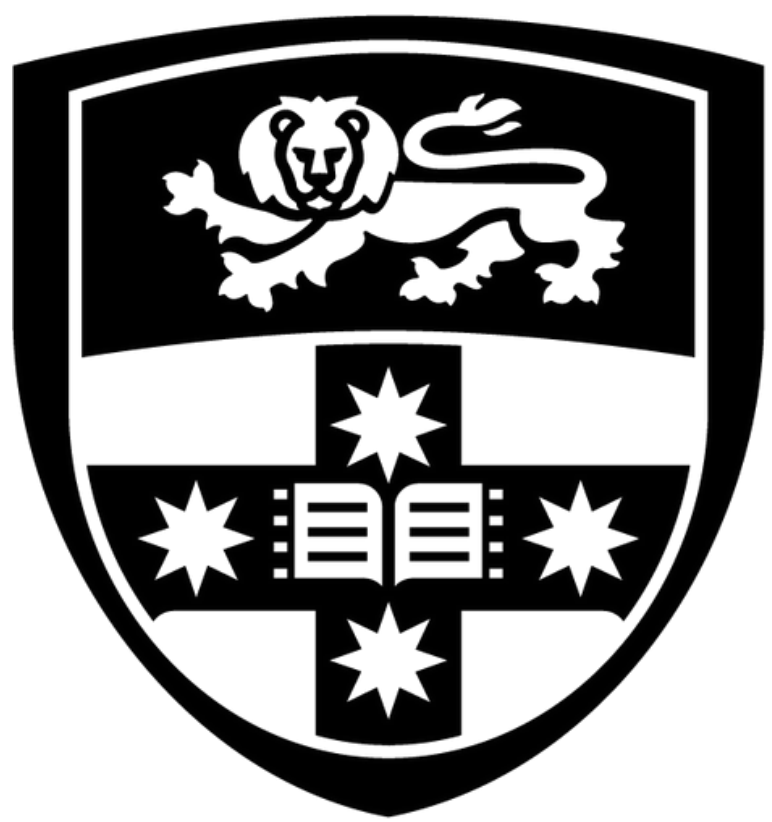
Chinese grammar may seem a little daunting at first with its use of particles, or counting words.

The Chinese Grammar Wiki provides a comprehensive online grammar guide with examples and structured by level to help guide you along.



LANGUAGE TOOLKIT

CHINESE



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