

#4: Watch Chinese channels and listen to Chinese music

Listening to Chinese music and watching Chinese soaps is a fun way to master the language and test your comprehension abilities away from the routine classroom. You can choose whatever you wish to watch. It is not a bad idea to watch some cartoons if you enjoy them. To begin with you can start watching a single show or mini-series. Once you are hooked onto the storyline then you are motivated to continue to watch it. This also helps to enhance your listening skills and mark the accents of the speakers.

#5: Browse the web in Chinese

Switching over to Chinese language social networks will force you to use Chinese characters regularly. This will also give you a platform to meet and interact with other Chinese netizens. Presently you will not be able to use Facebook or Twitter in China. However you can try out the local equivalents, [WeChat](#) & [Weibo](#).

#6: Take the HSK, a standardized Mandarin exam for the non-native speakers

[The HànyǔShuǐpíngKǎoshì \(HSK\)](#) is basically a Mandarin proficiency exam administered in China & abroad. There are around six levels of achievements in this exam. The most basic one tests you on just 150 words while the toughest one will check your ability to more than 5000 words.

At times people take the HSK to procure admission into a Chinese university while others wish to get a short-term language study scholarship. For those individuals who do not have any specific reason for learning Mandarin I recommend considering the skill mastered as the final goal. In case you have a specific goal in mind then you are motivated to do better.

i. 8 Myths about Mandarin Chinese, and How to Overcome Them

Millions of people all over the world study Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language. However, hundreds of millions are still diverted from learning it by misconceptions and stereotyping.

This article explains why some commonly held myths about learning Mandarin Chinese should be forgotten. It is not much more difficult than any other language.

Myth 1: You can achieve high proficiency level in Mandarin Chinese if you start learning it in childhood

Truth: Children don't memorize Chinese characters quickly and easily as it is supposed. Many studies have consistently demonstrated that adults perform even better than kids under the same conditions. It is typically asserted that older learners' brains are less flexible. However, adults' ability to build strong motivation for subject outweighs all disadvantages.

For me, the main message behind this myth is that children don't have all that knowledge about complexity of Mandarin. Just forget it and you will get the kids' benefits.

Myth 2: You need exceptional memory skills to learn Chinese words

	a	o	e	i	er	ai	ei	ao	ou	an	en	ang	eng	ong	i	ia	iao	ie
	a	o	e		er	ai		ao	ou	an	en	ang	eng		yi	ya	yao	ye
b	ba	bo				bai	bei	bao		ban	ben	bang	beng		bi		biao	bie
p	pa	po				pai	pei	pao	pou	pan	pen	pang	peng		pi		piao	pie
m	ma	mo	me			mai	mei	mao	mou	man	men	mang	meng		mi		miao	mie
f	fa	fo				fei			fou	fan	fen	fang	feng					
d	da		de			dai	dei	dao	dou	dan	den	dang	deng	dong	di		diao	die
t	ta		te			tai	tei	tao	tou	tan		tang	teng	tong	ti		tiao	tie
n	na		ne			nai	nei	nao	nou	nan	nen	nang	neng	nong	ni		niao	nie
l	la		le			lai	lei	lao	lou	lan		lang	leng	long	li	lia	liao	lie
g	ga		ge			gai	gei	gao	gou	gan	gen	gang	geng	gong				
k	ka		ke			kai	kei	kao	kou	kan	ken	kang	keng	kong				
h	ha		he			hai	hei	hao	hou	han	hen	hang	heng	hong				
z	za		ze	zi		zai	zei	zao	zou	zan	zen	zang	zeng	zong				
c	ca		ce	ci		cai		cao	cou	can	cen	cang	ceng	cong				
s	sa		se	si		sai		sao	sou	san	sen	sang	seng	song				

There are no complicated pronunciation rules like in English (oo = [u]) or in French (eau = [o])!

Myth 4: Mandarin is completely different from other languages; nothing in common with European languages

Truth: Mandarin Chinese has many distinctive features but you will be surprised by some similar concepts.

Basic grammatical terms are the same. There are pronouns, adverbs, verbs, prepositions, etc. The sentence structure has much in common with other languages.

Moreover, some proverbs and idioms have straight forward translation into English and Russian (I am sure there are even greater examples in other languages).

Example:

光阴似箭 – guāng yīn sì jiàn – How time flies! – Как летит время!

朵朵玫瑰皆有刺. – duǒ duǒ méi gui jiē yǒu cì. – There is no rose without a thorn. – Не бывает роз без шипов.

水滴石穿. – Shuǐ dī shí chuān. – Constant dripping wears away a stone. (If you persevere, you can achieve whatever goal.) – Вода камень точит. (Если быть упорным, можно достичь любой цели).

Myth 5: It takes years to be able to speak Mandarin on basic level

Truth: Mandarin grammar is much simpler than that of most European languages. There are no articles (like in English), genders (like in German and French) and cases (like in Russian). The verb is not changed to express the tense. The time of the action is indicated in the context.

Here is an example of reported speech in English and in Mandarin:

他说他的妈妈生病了. – He says that his mother was ill.

Literally: He + to say + his + mother + to get ill + particle 了 indicating action in the past.

Myth 6: Learning writing in Mandarin = learning calligraphy

Truth: calligraphy is an art and people who are really talented at it are quite rare (even in China). Nowadays, you don't need to learn writing with a brush. Many foreigners are satisfied with learning just typing in Mandarin on a computer. Typing with pinyin romanization is easy. It looks like a test

chances to travel to foreign countries or talk to foreigners. The ability to listen and speak foreign languages gradually overmasters the noble knowledge on classic languages. A Russian psychologist named Pavlov claimed that human learning is no difference from a dog. He believed learning is simply a result of "[Stimulus-Response](#)".

Meanwhile, the outbreak of World War II created the need of soldiers that could speak and listen certain target language speeches. Language teachers who were desperate for a quick approach to teach listening and speaking took this behaviorism theory almost without any hesitation and formed the Audio-Lingual approach. This approach emphasizes the skills of listening and speaking. Some of its distinct features are:

- The structure of a language can be condensed into a limited number of basic sentence patterns.
- The way to acquire these sentence patterns is repetition of dialogues about daily situations.
- Teachers will drill these repetitions and the students imitate.
- The correct answer got the rewards, the wrong answer got the punishment.

This approach is still adored by many "crazy" teachers who treat their students like animals. Surprisingly, lots of students enjoy this type of learning.

#4 The Communicative Approach

With the end of the Word War II and the advent of the world common market, a large population of people needed to learn a foreign language for work or personal reasons. Foreign language study ceased to be confined to the elite academies or to serve certain aims in specific situation. Almost all children in secondary school had the opportunity to study foreign languages. They learned foreign languages in order to communicate with their classmates, the community, and the foreign society that they live in.

Communication is very similar to a jigsaw puzzle. Different person has different pieces of the picture. You will talk and exchange information and get the whole picture right. This process is also how the language education experts now see the nature of second language learning: language should be treated as a tool to communicate rather than a system of signs and rules. Students don't learn how to use the language; they learn the language when they use it. Some techniques recommended by the communicative approach include:

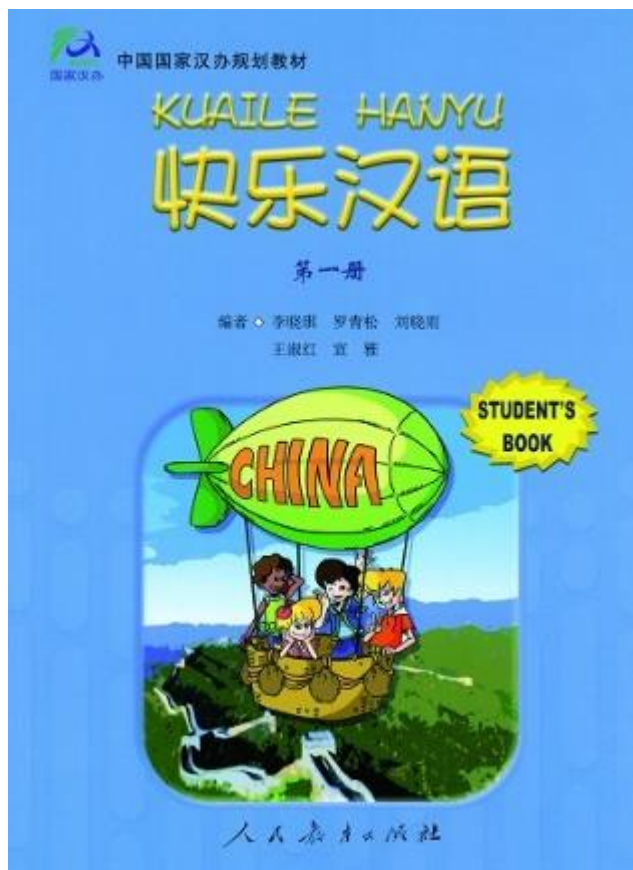
- Role-play/Pair-work
- Interviews/Surveys
- Games
- [Information gap](#) activity
- Language exchanges

A thorough application of this approach is to assign students perform real tasks in life in foreign language rather than merely stimulated practice in classroom. However, it faces a high risk of losing the control of class and students.

#5 The Post-method Approach

In the history of teaching modern languages formally in school, researchers and curriculum designers keep trying to find and apply more effective methods. However, they gradually realized that there is no such a thing called the best method or one pattern that fits all. In fact, a particular aspect of language, such as writing or speaking requires a unique way to teach while an individual

《快乐汉语》 Kuaile Hanyu



Kuaile Hanyu literally translates to Happy Chinese, is a set of Chinese teaching materials specially compiled for teenagers. Kuaile Hanyu is initially designed for British middle school student aged from 11 to 16. Therefore, it suits the psychological level and learning requirements of young learners. It has full content while it uses few and simple words to covers topics of school and daily life. The entire set consists of a student's book, a teacher's book, a workbook, flash cards, wall charts and CDs. Hence practical choice for teachers and students.

《当代中文》 Contemporary Chinese

孩子总是喜欢坐在地上 (type 1)
(hái zi zǒng shì xǐ huan zuò zài dì shàng)

This may be a lot of information to take in and may be overwhelming but don't fret. If you continue to listen and read as much real Chinese as you can, it will let you get a natural feel for these exceptions and put them before the place word naturally. These verbs can be also used in the normal order (after the place) in case we want to emphasize the place. For example:

I live in US

我在美国住。

(wǒ zài měi guó zhù) (not in China).

Take an easy Chinese sentence, which still contains most of the sentence grammatical words (like subject, object, verb, prepositions and etc.) and say it to yourself for some days until you will be able to recite it fluently. Then, whenever you need to compose a sentence in Chinese only check the situation in this sentence frame.

For more structures or uses, you can check [here to get an e-book about grammar](#) points collection of Chinese.

iii. Chinese Characters

Chinese characters (汉字, hànzi) comprise the oldest continuously used system of writing in the world, but their complex structures and formations often terrify many modern learners. To add to the confusion, certain countries (mainland China, Singapore, and Malaysia) use the Simplified version of certain characters (简体字), while others (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and, to a limited extent, South Korea) use the corresponding Traditional version (繁体字).

But have no fear: If you are determined to learn Chinese and master the writing of Chinese characters, we have the tools and techniques for you here to help you overcome your anxiety and achieve success in your learning journey.

Are Chinese Characters Worth Learning? How Do I Get Started?

As we all know, Chinese uses characters as the basis of its written system. This aspect makes it quite different from most other languages. This characteristic has also become a barrier for westerners to learn Chinese. Some individuals decide not to learn the language at all because they think they could never master it. Others are brave enough to get started but decide to learn only to speak. Every year I get students who ask me the same question: "Should I learn characters?" So first we will talk about learning characters.