



SayMei

BEGINNER FIELD GUIDE

CHARACTERS • EARLY BEGINNER

Learn 100 Useful Chinese Characters by Component

Learn exactly 100 high-utility Simplified Chinese characters in visible component families, and meet every character inside a useful word or phrase.

nǐ → nǐ hǎo

你 → 你好

you → hello

亻 is the left-side form of 人, the person component.

By the end, you can...

- ✓ Explain the difference between a stroke, a component, and an indexing radical
- ✓ Recognize recurring forms such as 亻, 讠, 扌, 冫, and 讠
- ✓ Connect 100 characters to useful words rather than memorizing isolated English labels



Early beginner

4–6 hours across many short sessions

31 pages

Answer guide

Self-contained print practice. Audio and web tools are optional.



1

Know what you are looking at

After this page, you can Distinguish four related ideas before using the component families.

COMPARE

Stroke, component, radical, character

Term	Plain-language job	Example
Stroke	One continuous pen movement	𠂇 is written with two strokes
Component	A reusable graphic unit inside a character	𠂇 in 你 and 他
Radical	The indexing component chosen to classify a character in a dictionary	你 is indexed under 𠂇 in common radical systems
Character	A complete written unit linked to a spoken syllable and usually a morpheme	你 nǐ · you
Word	The meaning unit you use in context; it may contain one or more characters	你好 nǐ hǎo · hello



Find, cover, recall

Find one useful row. Cover it and reconstruct the target form before checking.



2

Know what you are looking at CONTINUED

After this page, you can Distinguish four related ideas before using the component families.

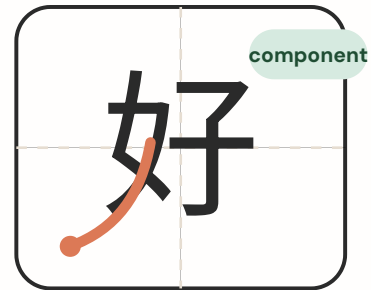
COMPARE

What stroke order is for

Stroke order is the standardized sequence of pen movements used to write a character. It supports a stable written form and lets you compare your handwriting with a trusted model. This workbook does not include per-character stroke diagrams. If handwriting is part of your goal, use an authoritative animation or diagram for each character; general tendencies such as top before bottom and left before right do not replace its specific standard order.

Put it in your own words.

Cover this card and explain the idea in one sentence.



A visual anchor for this page's idea



3

People: 人 and 亻

After this page, you can Recognize the full person form and its compressed left-side form.

POINT

People components

Say each useful word, then point to the person component.

rén

人

人
person

rénmen

人们

people

nǐ

亻 + 尔

你
you

nǐ hǎo

你好

hello

tā

亻 + 也

他
he; him

tāmen

他们

they; them

men

亻 + 们

们
plural suffix for people

wǒmen

我们

we; us



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





4

People: 人 and 亻 CONTINUED

After this page, you can Recognize the full person form and its compressed left-side form.

POINT

People components

Say each useful word, then point to the person component.

zhù

亻 + 主

住

live; stay

zhù zài

住在

live at; stay at

shén

亻 + 十

什

what element in 什么

shénme

什么

what

huì

人 at the top

会

can; know how to

huì shuō

会说

can speak

gè

人 at the top

个

general classifier

yí ge

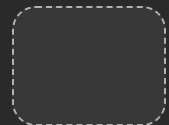
一个

one; one item



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





5

Speech and the mouth: 口

After this page, you can Find 口 when it is a whole character or a component in everyday speech words.



FIND

Mouth components

kǒu

口

mouth; opening

ménkǒu

门口

doorway; entrance

chī

口 + 乞

eat

chīfàn

吃饭

eat a meal

hē

口 + 曷

drink

hē shuǐ

喝水

drink water

jiào

口 + 丩

be called; call

wǒ jiào...

我叫...

my name is...



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





6

Speech and the mouth: 口 CONTINUED

After this page, you can Find 口 when it is a whole character or a component in everyday speech words.

 FIND

Mouth components

ma

口 + 马

吗

yes-no question particle

hǎo ma

好吗

is that okay?

ne

口 + 尼

呢

follow-up particle

nǐ ne

你呢

and you?

nǎ

口 + 那

哪

which

nǎlǐ

哪里

where

tīng

口 + 斤

听

listen; hear

tīngshuō

听说

hear that; be told



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





7

The 女 component

After this page, you can Recognize 女 in a small set of common identity and family words without treating it as a universal meaning key.

 FIND

Characters containing 女

nǚ

女

女

woman; female

nǚrén

女人

woman

hǎo

女 + 子

好

good

hěnhǎo

很好

very good

tā

女 + 也

她

she; her

tāmen

她们 they; them (female group)

mā

女 + 马

妈

mother

māma

妈妈

mom

xìng

女 + 生

姓

surname; be surnamed

xìngmíng

姓名

full name

yào

女 in the lower position

要

want; need

xiǎng yào

想要

would like; want



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





8

Day and light: 日

After this page, you can Recognize 日 in common time and state characters.

FIND

Characters containing 日

rì

日

日

day; sun

shēngrì

生日

birthday

míng

日 + 月

明

bright; next

míngtiān

明天

tomorrow

shí

日 + 寸

时

time; hour

shíjiān

时间

time

zǎo

日 + 十

早

early

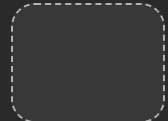
zǎoshang

早上

morning

**Close the page. Retrieve two.**

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





9

Day and light: 日 CONTINUED

After this page, you can Recognize 日 in common time and state characters.

 FIND

Characters containing 日

wǎn

日 + 免

晚

late; evening

wǎnshang

晚上

evening

xīng

日 + 生

星

star

xīngqī

星期

week

zuó

日 + 乍

昨

yesterday element

zuótiān

昨天

yesterday

shì

日 at the top

是

be; is

shì

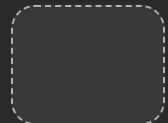
是

be; yes in confirmation



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





10

Wood and objects: 木

After this page, you can see how 木 appears alone and on the left or lower part of useful object words.

 FIND

Characters containing 木

mù

木

木

wood; tree

mùtóu

木头

wood

běn

木 + 一

本

root; book classifier

shūběn

书本

books; book

guǒ

田 over a 木-
shaped lower
form

果

fruit; result

shuǐguǒ

水果

fruit

xiào

木 + 交

校

school element

xuéxiào

学校

school

jī

木 + 几

机

machine

shǒujī

手机

mobile phone



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





11

Water and the 氵 form

After this page, you can Recognize the three-dot water form without assuming that every word still has an obvious water meaning.



Water components

shuǐ

水

水

water

hē shuǐ

喝水

drink water

méi

氵 + 没

没

not; have not

méiyǒu

没有

not have; there is not

xǐ

氵 + 先

洗

wash

xǐshǒu

洗手

wash hands

hàn

氵 + 又

汉

Han; Chinese element

Hànyǔ

汉语

Mandarin Chinese; Chinese language



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





12

Hand and the 扌 form

After this page, you can Notice hand-related graphic forms in common actions.

 FIND

Hand components

shǒu

手

手

hand

shǒujī

手机

mobile phone

dǎ

扌 + 丁

打

hit; do by hand

dǎ diànhuà

打电话

make a phone call

zhǎo

扌 + 戈

找

look for

zhǎodào

找到

find

ná

手 at the bottom

拿

take; hold

ná zǒu

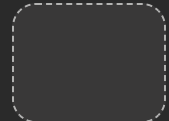
拿走

take away



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





13

Heart and the 忄 form

After this page, you can Recognize heart forms in common thinking, feeling, and state words.

 FIND

Heart components

xīn

心

心

heart; mind

xiǎoxīn

小心

be careful

xiǎng

心 at the
bottom

想

think; want

xiǎng yào

想要

would like; want

máng

忄 + 亡

忙

busy

hěn máng

很忙

very busy

kuài

忄 + 夊

快

fast; quick

kuài diǎn

快点

hurry; a little faster



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





14

Speech and the 讠 form

After this page, you can Recognize the Simplified Chinese side form associated with 言 in high-use communication words.

 FIND

Speech components

shuō

讠 + 兑

说

speak; say

shuōhuà

说话

speak; talk

huà

讠 + 舌

话

speech; words

diànhuà

电话

telephone; phone call

qǐng

讠 + 青

请

please; invite

qǐngwèn

请问

excuse me; may I ask

xiè

讠 + 射

谢

thank

xièxie

谢谢

thank you

dú

讠 + 卖

读

read

dúshū

读书

read; study

yǔ

讠 + 吾

语

language

Hànyǔ

汉语

Mandarin Chinese; Chinese language



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





15

The roof component: 宀

After this page, you can Recognize a common top component while learning the whole modern word rather than inventing a picture story.

 FIND

Characters containing 宀

jiā

宀 + 豕

家

home; family

huíjiā

回家

go home; return home

zì

宀 + 子

字

written character; word
element

míngzi

名字

name

ān

宀 + 女

安

peaceful; safe

ānquán

安全

safe; safety

kè

宀 + 各

客

guest; customer

kèrén

客人

guest



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





16

Movement: 走, 走, and 足

After this page, you can Notice three movement-related graphic families in direction and travel words.

SORT

Movement components

zhè

走 + 文

这

this

zhè ge

这个

this one

hái

走 + 不

还

still; also

hái hǎo

还好

not bad; okay

guò

走 + 寸

过

pass; cross; experienced-action marker

guòqù

过去

the past; go over

jìn

走 + 井

进

enter; advance

jìnqu

进去

go in

**Close the page. Retrieve two.**

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





17

Movement: 走, 走, and 足 CONTINUED

After this page, you can Notice three movement-related graphic families in direction and travel words.

 SORT

Movement components

jìn

走 + 斤

近

near

fùjìn

附近

nearby

zǒu

走

走

walk; leave

zǒulù

走路

walk

lù

足 + 各

路

road; route

lùkǒu

路口

intersection

pǎo

足 + 包

跑

run

pǎobù

跑步

run; go running



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





18

Number building blocks

After this page, you can Recognize the twelve characters that build common beginner quantities.

BUILD

Numbers

yī

一



one

yí ge

一个

one; one item

èr

二



two

èr yuè

二月

February

sān

三



three

sān diǎn

三点

three o'clock

sì

四



four

sì ge

四个

four items

wǔ

五



five

wǔ suì

五岁

five years old

liù

六



six

liù yuè

六月

June



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





19

Number building blocks CONTINUED

After this page, you can Recognize the twelve characters that build common beginner quantities.

BUILD

Numbers

qī

七

七

seven

qī tiān

七天

seven days

bā

八

八

eight

bā diǎn

八点

eight o'clock

jiǔ

九

九

nine

jiǔ yuè

九月

September

shí

十

十

ten

shí kuài

十块

ten kuai

bǎi

百

百

hundred

yì bǎi

一百

one hundred

qiān

千

千

thousand

yì qiān

一千

one thousand



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





20

Eight independent high-frequency forms

After this page, you can Learn whole forms that are too useful to omit even when one shared component is not the main memory hook.

RETRIEVE

Core building blocks

Treat 'independent character' as an honest label; do not force a picture story where it does not help.

wǒ

我

I; me

我 ·
independent
character

wǒmen

我们

we; us

bù

不

not

不 ·
independent
character

bú shì

不是

is not; no

yǒu

有

have; there is

有 ·
independent
character

méiyǒu

没有

not have; there is not

zài

在

be at; in

土 in the lower
position

xiànzài

现在

now



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





21

Eight independent high-frequency forms

CONTINUED

After this page, you can Learn whole forms that are too useful to omit even when one shared component is not the main memory hook.

RETRIEVE

Core building blocks

Treat 'independent character' as an honest label; do not force a picture story where it does not help.

hěn

彳 + 艮

很

very; quite

hěn hǎo

很好

very good

dà

大

大

big

dàxué

大学

university

xiǎo

小

小

small

xiǎoxīn

小心

be careful

de

白 + 勺

的

possession and description
marker

wǒ de

我的

my; mine



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





22

Door and enclosure forms

After this page, you can Distinguish a component that surrounds content from the content inside it.

COMPARE

门 and 口 enclosures

mén

door

门

ménkǒu

门口

doorway; entrance

wèn

ask

门 surrounding 口

qǐngwèn

请问

excuse me; may I ask

jiān

between; room; measure word for rooms

门 surrounding 日

shíjiān

时间

time

guó

country

口 surrounding 玉

Zhōngguó

中国

China

huí

return; go back

口 surrounding 口

huíjiā

回家

go home; return home



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





23

Ten essential independent characters

After this page, you can Complete the 100-character set with time, place, and action forms used throughout beginner Mandarin.

RETRIEVE

Core time, place, and action characters

zhōng

□ crossed by
|



middle; China element

Zhōngguó



China

xué

子 in the lower
position



study; learn

xuésheng



student

shēng

生 ·
independent
character


be born; life; student
element

shēngrì



birthday

tiān

一 over 大



day; sky

míngtiān



tomorrow

yuè

月



month; moon

yī yuè



January



Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





24

Ten essential independent characters

CONTINUED

After this page, you can Complete the 100-character set with time, place, and action forms used throughout beginner Mandarin.

 RETRIEVE

Core time, place, and action characters

nián

年

year

 年 ·
independent
character

jīnnián

今年

this year

lái

来

come

 来 ·
independent
character

lái

来

come

qù

去

go

土 + 厶

qù

去

go

shàng

上

up; on; previous

 上 ·
independent
character

zǎoshang

早上

morning

xià

下

down; under; next

 下 ·
independent
character

xiàwǔ

下午

afternoon


Close the page. Retrieve two.

Write or say two characters from this family, then add one useful word for each.





25

Check the component map

After this page, you can Retrieve components and useful words without reading the grids first.

CHECK

Eight closed checks

Answer from memory, then use the detachable key.

1

WORKED EXAMPLE

Which two characters both contain 讠 ?



说 and 请



洗 and 没



你 and 他



问 and 间

Why it works: It completes the requested job using the target pattern.

2

Which side form of 水 appears in 没?



亅



冫



扌



丩

3

What is inside 门 in 问?



日



口



玉



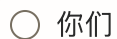
女

4

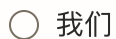
Which useful word means 'we; us'?



他们



你们



我们



人们

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



26

Check the component map CONTINUED

After this page, you can Retrieve components and useful words without reading the grids first.

CHECK

Eight closed checks

Answer from memory, then use the detachable key.

5

Which character means 'go'?

☐ 来☐ 去☐ 回☐ 在

6

In 学生, which character carries the meaning 'study; learn'?

☐ 学☐ 生

7

Which useful word contains 机?

☐ 学校☐ 手机☐ 水果☐ 时间

8

Which form is the common left-side person component?

☐ 亻☐ 讠☐ 讠☐ 扌

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



27

Build your own character map

After this page, you can Connect a small personal set to words you expect to use.

 MAP

My next eight

9

Choose eight characters from the grids. For each, write the character, component cue, useful word, and one context where you expect to see or type it. Star two to retrieve again after a delay.

Success looks like Any eight characters from the set with accurate component cues, useful words, contexts, and two delayed-review choices are acceptable.

Choose your mode Write in Hanzi · write in tone-marked pinyin · say and record it



28

Check your work

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

1

Which two characters both contain 讠?

shuō · qǐng

说 and 请

2

Which side form of 水 appears in 没?

shuǐ

氵

3

What is inside 门 in 问?

kǒu

口

4

Which useful word means 'we; us'?

wǒmen

我们

5

Which character means 'go'?

qù

去

6

In 学生, which character carries the meaning 'study; learn'?

xué

学

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.



29

Check your work CONTINUED

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

7

Which useful word contains 机?

shǒujī

手机

8

Which form is the common left-side person component?

rén

亻

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.



30

Check your work CONTINUED

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

9

Choose eight characters from the grids. For each, write the character, component cue, useful word, and one context where you expect to see or type it. Star two to retrieve again after a delay.

ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER

nǐ — person component + ěr — nǐ hǎo; hē — kǒu + hé — hē shuǐ; míng — rì + yuè — míngtiān; xiào — mù + jiāo — xuéxiào; qǐng — speech component + qīng — qǐngwèn; lù — zú + gè — lùkǒu; xué — lower zǐ — xuésheng; yuè — yī yuè. Retry stars: qǐng and lù.

你—你 + 尔—你好—messages; 喝—口 + 曷—喝水—menus; 明—日 + 月—明天—calendars; 校—木 + 交—学校—signs; 请—讠 + 青—请问—directions; 路—足 + 各—路口—maps; 学—lower 子—学生—forms; 月—月—一月—calendars. Retry stars: 请 and 路.

Success criteria: Any eight characters from the set with accurate component cues, useful words, contexts, and two delayed-review choices are acceptable.

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.