



Immersion Guides

Mandarin Phrasebook



中国人口出版社

China Population Publishing House

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The Ultimate Beijing Phrasebook

What's the word for basil in Mandarin? How do you tell your Beijing landlord to fix a leaky pipe? What Chinese characters should you write on a missing pet flyer?

Find out in Immersion Guides' *Mandarin Phrasebook*, the companion volume to the popular *Insider's Guide to Beijing*, and the only English-Mandarin phrasebook to address the specific language needs of Beijing's foreign residents and visitors.

Packed with essential phrases, vocabulary and Beijing slang, this indispensable book gives you the confidence to communicate effectively in a wide range of situations, from ordering a meal and bargaining in the markets to renting an apartment and interviewing an ayi.

Informative, funny and easy to use, the *Mandarin Phrasebook* will help you get the best deals – and deal out the best quips.

Say it like you mean it – like a true Beijinger!

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Taxi basics

- I'm going to 我去... Wǒ qù
 - (1) The airport 机场 jīchǎng
 - (2) Sanlitun 三里屯 Sānlitún
 - (3) Beijing Railway Station 北京站 Běijīng Zhàn
- How long will it take to get to ...
到...要多长时间 Dào ... yào duōcháng shíjiān?
- First we will go to ..., then we will go to ... 我们先去..., 再去...
Wǒmen xiān qù..., zài qù...
- We are sharing this taxi: we'll drop her off first then me 我们一起打车,
先送她再送我。Wǒmen yìqǐ dǎ chē, xiān sòng tā zài sòng wǒ.
- Take whichever way will be fastest 哪儿快走哪儿 Nǎr kuài zǒu nǎr
- At the ... make a left / right 在...左/右转 Zài ... zuǒ/yòu zhuǎn
 - (1) intersection 十字路口 shízì lùkǒu
 - (2) stoplight 红绿灯 hónglǜdēng
 - (3) road entrance 路口 lùkǒu
- Go... 往...走 Wǎng... zǒu
 - (1) north 北 běi (2) south 南 nán (3) east 东 dōng (4) west 西 xī
- Turn ... 往...转 Wǎng... zhuǎn
 - (1) right/left 右/左 yòu / zuǒ (2) that way 那边 nàbiān
- Turn around (U-turn) 调头 Diàotóu
- Not here 不在这儿 bù zài zhèr
- Keep going 继续走 Jìxù zǒu
- Go straight 直走 Zhí zǒu
- Go to the end 走到头 Zǒu dào tóu
- Exit here 从这儿出去 Cóng zhèr chūqù
- Drive (faster / slower) 开(快 / 慢)点儿 Kāi (kuài / màn) diǎnr
- Take the auxiliary road (bike lane) 走辅路 Zǒu fǔlù
- S/he will get off, but I will keep going
他下车, 我接着走 Tā xiàchē, wǒ jiēzhe zǒu
- Please wait here, I will be back in a little bit
请等一会儿, 我马上回来 Qǐng děng yíhuìr, wǒ mǎshàng huílái
- We're picking someone up 我们去接个人 Wǒmen qù jiē gè rén
- Stop here 停这儿吧 Tíng zhèr ba
- I'll get out here 我在这儿下 Wǒ zài zhèr xià

Basics

- Hello 你好 Nǐ hǎo
- Wait a moment 等一下 Dēng yíxià
- Thank you 谢谢 Xièxie
- You're welcome 不客气 Bú kèqi
- Where is the bathroom? 厕所在哪儿 Cèsuǒ zài nǎr?
- How much does it cost? 多少钱? Dūoshào qián?
- Excuse me / Sorry to trouble you (to get attention)
对不起麻烦你 Duìbùqǐ máfán nǐ
- Can I ask you ... 请问一下... Qǐng wèn yí xià ...
- Can you help me? 你可以帮我一下吗? Nǐ kěyǐ bāng wǒ yíxià ma?
- Help (lit: save life)! 救命! Jiù mìng!
- I don't want it (我)不要 (Wǒ) bùyào
- here 这儿 zhèr
- there 那儿 nàr

Communication

- Do you speak English? 你会说英语吗? Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?
- I don't speak Chinese
我不会说中文 Wǒ bú huì shuō zhōngwén
- I don't understand
我听不懂 Wǒ tīng bùdǒng
- I beg your pardon / Could you repeat that?
能重复一遍吗? Néng chóngfù yí biàn ma? /
请你再说一遍 Qǐng nǐ zài shuō yí biàn
- Could you point to the phrase in this book?
你能在这本书里指出这个词吗?
Nǐ néng zài zhè běn shū lǐ zhīchū zhè gè cí ma?
- Just a minute, I'll look it up
等一下, 我找一找 Dēng yíxià, wǒ zhǎo yí zhǎo
- I can't find the word/phrase
我找不着这个字/词 Wǒ zhǎo bù zháo zhè gè zì / cí

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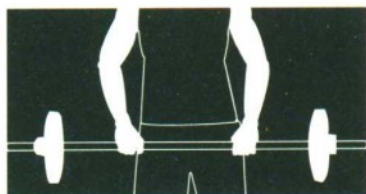
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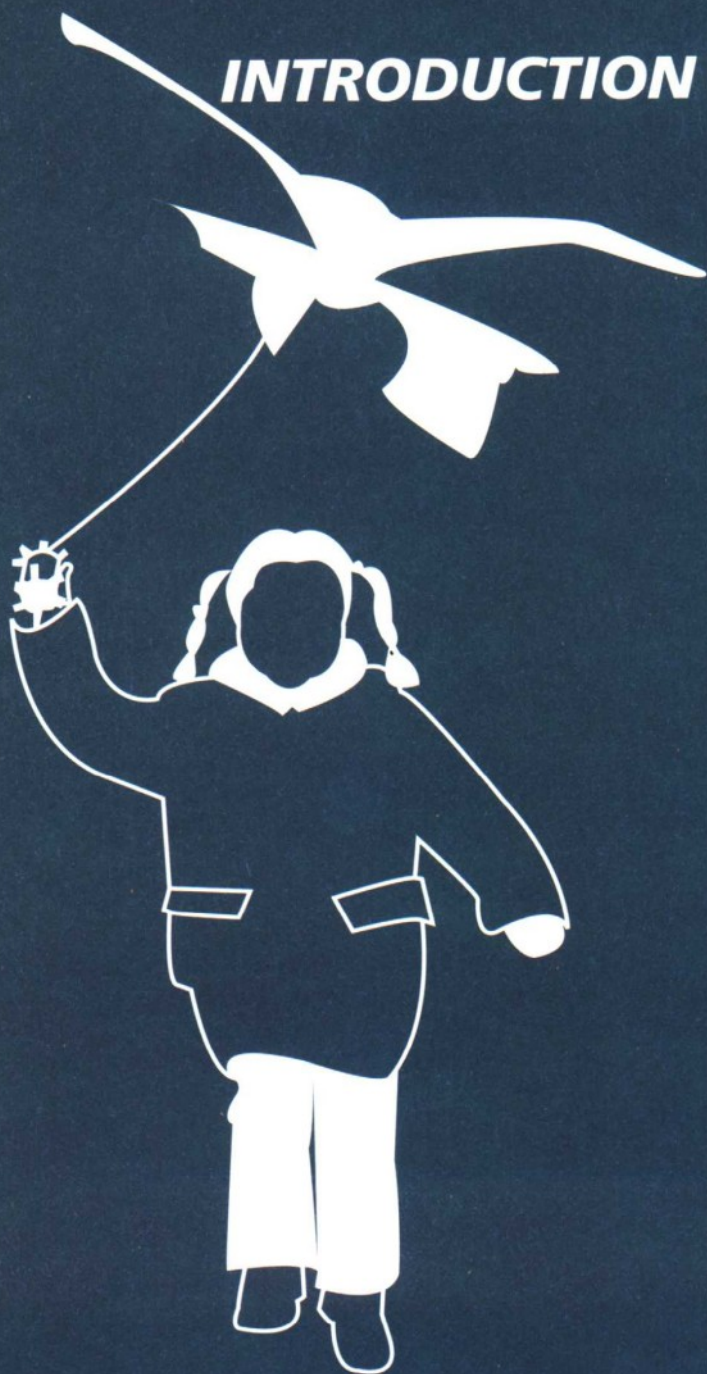
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INTRODUCTION



The *Mandarin Phrasebook* is designed to help foreigners get more out of life in Beijing. It introduces essential phrases, vocabulary and slang that enable readers to communicate effectively in the daily situations they encounter in Beijing – from renting an apartment and interviewing an *ayi* to chatting with a cabdriver and bargaining in the markets.

This book is not a dry textbook, however. To be sure, it is informative and accurate, yet like all true Beijing *ren*, it is also leavened with irreverent humor and favors local idioms over standard Mandarin. Best of all, it promises the benefit of a heightened Beijing experience without the drawback of a final exam.

Organization

Like its companion volume – the *Insider's Guide to Beijing* guidebook – this phrasebook is divided into 15 chapters, each of which tackles a major aspect of life in Beijing (Kids, Housing, Nightlife and so on). This Introduction chapter begins with a primer on the pronunciation and grammar of Mandarin as well as a collection of basic nouns, verbs and adjectives.

All the words and phrases contained in the book are written in English, Chinese characters and Pinyin with tone marks. Each chapter provides examples of how to use relevant vocabulary and phrases, as well as responses typically offered by Beijingers. This material is augmented by illustrations and sidebars that delve into topics both practical and obscure. For convenient reference, an English-Mandarin/Mandarin-English glossary is included in the back.

Thanks to such content, the book should appeal to readers with differing levels of Mandarin proficiency. It promises to teach the proficient speaker things s/he would never, ever learn in a class.

Pronunciation

Adopted by China in the late 1950s, Pinyin is a system of Romanizing the sounds of Mandarin Chinese to make them recognizable to learners. This phrasebook uses Pinyin, in which each sound is the combination of initials (a consonant) and finals (one or more vowels, sometimes with *n* or *ng*). Many letters and sounds in Pinyin can be read normally for English speakers, while some are quite different. Familiarizing yourself with the system pays off, because street signs and proper names are all written in pinyin.

Initials

• The consonants/initials: b, ch, d, f, g, h, k, l, m, n, p, s, sh, t, w, y can all be read as in English

- The letters below follow these special pronunciation rules:

c is like **ts** in **hats**

j is like the **j** in **jeans**

q is like **ch** in **cheek**, with a puff of air

x is best described as a hissing cross between s and sh, with a puff of air. (There is no similar sound in English)

z is like **ds** in **lids**

zh is like a burly j sound, sort of like the **g** sound in **German** (similar in tongue position to the 'ch' and 'sh')

r is like the **ur** in **pleasure** (in American English)

Finals

The vowel sounds in Chinese are actually more consistent when written in pinyin than when they are written in English.

a like the **a** in **far**

e on its own is a bit like **uh** or the French **oe** in **oeuf**, but when used as a final it is like the **e** in **yes**

i like **ee** in **free**, but after **ch**, **c**, **zh**, **z**, **sh** and **s** is like the **i** in **rip**

o like the **o** in **more**

u like the **u** in **flute**, but like **ü** when after **q**, **j** **x**

ü like the French **tu**

Combined Letters

an like **ahn**

ang like **ahng**

en like the **un** in **under**

eng like **ung** in **rung**

er like **er** in **murder**

ian like **yen**

iang like **yahng**

in like **ean** in **mean**

ing like the **ing** in **bling-bling**

iong like **yohng**

ong like **ohng**

uan like **oowahn** (or **oowen** after **x**, **j**, and **q**)

uang like **wahng**

un **oohn**

üan like **you ahn**

- Many of these combined vowel sounds (aka diphthongs) are unlike their English pronunciations and must be memorized.

ai like **eye**

ao like **ow** in **cow**

ei like the **ay** in **hay**