

# Speak ut

# Chinese

## Phrasebook

### 开口说中文

### 旅游汉语实用手册

李凌燕 著



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李凌燕 著 刘继滨 译



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## Introduction

Chinese is one of the oldest languages in the world. It has several thousand years' history, ever changing, but never interrupted. About 60% of Korean vocabulary comes from Chinese. Written Japanese has several thousand characters borrowed from Chinese.

While there are many different spoken languages and dialects in China, like Cantonese, Shanghainese, Hokkien, there is only one written language. This was an important element in keeping a very diverse country unified. Centuries ago the only way people from different regions in China could communicate was through the written language.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Chinese have developed what is known as standard Mandarin, which is the spoken form of the written language. It is based on Beijing dialects, a branch of the northern dialects of Chinese language.

## Pronunciation

Chinese is not a phonetic language. Most of Mandarin sounds are easy for English speaker to pronounce, some sounds are difficult and requires more practice.

Pinyin is a set of phonetic symbols adopted several decades ago for marking the pronunciation of Chinese characters. A syllable in Pinyin consists of three element (1) an initial or the

beginning sound, (2) a final, the ending of a syllable, (3) a tone which characterizes the whole syllable.

There are 21 initials in Mandarin.

Chinese Initials		
<i>Pinyin</i>	Sound	English Example
b	baw	like "b" in "book"
p	paw	like "p" in "pain"
m	maw	like "m" in "more"
f	faw	like "f" in "fork"
d	duh	like "d" in "day"
t	tuh	like "t" in "tea"
n	nuh	like "n" in "noon"
l	luh	like "l" in "look"
g	guh	like "g" in "good"
k	kuh	like "k" in "kite"
h	huh	like "h" in "horse"
j	gee	like "j" in "jeep"
q	chee	like "ch" in "cheap"
x	she	like "sh" in "sheep"
z	dzuh	like "ds" in "words"
c	tsuh	like "ts" in "huts"
s	suh	like "s" in "sun"
zh	jir	like "g" in "germ"
ch	chir	like "ch" in "churn"
sh	shir	like "sh" in "shirt"
r	ir	like "r" in "roll"

A final is the concluding sound of a word and there are thirty-six of them. The vowels may be either long or short and this affects the pronunciation. Some words end in only one vowel (simple finals), some end in two or three vowels, and some end in nasal sounds like -n or -ng (compound finals).

Chinese Finals		
Pinyin	Sound	English Example
a	ah	like "a" in "father"
o	aw	like "o" in "or"
e	uh	like "ir" in "dirty"
i	ee	like "i" in "in"
u	oo	like "u" in "blue"
ü	yew	no equivalent in English, like "u" in "lune" (French pronunciation)
er	ar	no equivalent in English
ai	ye	like "y" in "by"
ao	ow	like "ow" in "cow"
ei	ay	like "ei" in "eight"
ia	ya	like "yar" in "yard"
ie	yeh	like "ye" in "yes"
iu	yo	like "you"
iao	yaow	like "i" in "in" plus "ow" in "cow"
ou	oh	like "oa" in "coat"
ua	wa	like "wa" in "waft"
ui	way	like "way"
uo	waw	like "war"
uai	why	like "why"

(continual)

ue	yweh	no equivalent in English, like “u” in “lune” (French pronunciation) plus “e” in “pet”
an	ahn	like “an” in “land”
ang	ahng	no equivalent in English, like “an” in “ancien” (French pronunciation)
en	un	like “en” in “stolen”
eng	ung	like “en” in “stolen” plus “ng” in “long”
ong	oong	like “or” in “worn” plus “ng” in “long”
in	een	like “in”
ing	eeng	like “ing” in “spring”
ian	yan	like “yen”
iang	yahng	like “yong”
iong	yoong	like “i” in “bin” plus “ong” in “long”
uan	wan	like “wan” in “swan”
uang	wahng	no equivalent in English, like “u” in “flute” plus “an” in “ancien” (French pronunciation)
un	one	like “u” in “flute” plus “en” in “stolen”
ueng	wung	like “u” in “flute” plus “ng” in “long”
uan	ywan	no equivalent in English, like “u” in “lune” (French pronunciation) plus “an” in “land”
un	yewn	no equivalent in English, like “u” in “lune” (French pronunciation) plus “n” in “stolen”

Chinese is a tonal language. Tones are the changes of the pitch in pronunciation of a syllable. There are 4 tones in Mandarin. Each Chinese character carries a tone. Different tones

carry different meanings. For example, “mā” - mother; “má” - a questions word; “mǎ” - horse; “mà” - to scold. Imagine how embarrassing it could be to say a word with the incorrect tone.

The following chart illustrates the four tones:

Name	1 <sup>st</sup> Tone	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tone	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tone	4 <sup>th</sup> Tone
Form	—	ˊ	ˇ	ˋ
Example	mā	má	mǎ	mà

Pronunciation

## Character

The Chinese Character has a history of several thousand years. It underwent many improvements. In 1956, the Chinese government, in an effort to raise the literacy rate, simplified the characters. In the traditional or complex form, a simplified character such as 机 looks like this 機. Now people living in mainland adopt the simplified Chinese character, while Taiwan, Hong Kong and some overseas Chinese communities continue to use the traditional forms.



# Preface



Welcome to Beijing for travel or business!

This *Speak Out Chinese Phrasebook* is designed to facilitate your stay in China by making simple communication with the Chinese possible for you. It differs from other Chinese textbooks in that it is a practical oral guide for daily communication. Altogether ten such topics are introduced and hopefully this book will come to your timely and effective help whether you are looking for restaurants or asking for the location of bus stations in the streets.

To serve this purpose, every sentence has pronunciation indications in English to help you say the sentence in addition to Pinin notes for Chinese characters. My Canadian friend Ms. Steffany Alden has undertaken this tremendous task and I would like to give my heart-felt gratitude to her.

In addition to language for daily communication, as much as possible of Chinese culture, customs, life habits and practical information of modern Chinese city life are introduced after each sentence. So long as you can find the right sentence pattern and characters in vocabulary entries and show them to the hospitable Chinese people, they will give you warm help.

The Chinese language is becoming more and more international with ever increasing number of Chinese learners. It is my hope and honor that this book will be an interesting beginning of Chinese learning for you. If interested, you can try to memorize the phrases for daily communication after each

sentence and in this way lay the foundation for future Chinese studies.

I sincerely hope this guide will be well accepted for the possible convenience it is intended to bring to you. Comments and suggestions in case of any error are welcomed.

Li Lingyan



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## 1. Hello / Good morning / Good evening.

Nǐhǎo / Zǎo shang hǎo / Wǎn shang hǎo.

你好 / 早上好 / 晚上好。

nee how/dsow shahng how/wahn shahng how

Chinese always say “你好 nǐ hǎo” when they meet for the first time. They will say “您好 nín hǎo” to the elder or the respected person. In general, we say “hello” in English to each other according to the time period, but Chinese will not say “晚上好 wǎn shang hǎo”. They can just say “你好 nǐ hǎo” at anytime during the whole day.

“你好 nǐ hǎo” is the most common expression used for greeting others. It can be used when meeting a person for the first time and acquaintances alike. “您好 nín hǎo” is used to express respect to the elders, teachers, the higher-up and so on.

## o Hello.

Nǐ hǎo / Nín hǎo.

你好 / 您好。

nee how/neen how

## o Good morning.

Nǐ zǎo.

你早。

nee dsow

## o Good evening.

Wǎn shang hǎo.

晚上好。

wahn shahng how



you	>	你	nǐ	nee
good	>	好	hǎo	how
you(respectful form)	>	您	nín	neen
morning	>	早上	zǎo shang	dsow shahng
evening	>	晚上	wǎn shang	wahn shahng

## 2. Good bye.

Zài jiàn.

再见。

dsye gyan

“Bye-bye”, the common oral expression to say Good-bye, which is widely used even by the elders and children in modern China. Due to the similarity in sound between “88 (bā bā)” and “bye-bye”, people often use the number “88” to say “bye-bye” when they chat online. “再见 zài jiàn” can be literally translated into “see you again”. “See you tomorrow” in Chinese is “明天见 míng tiān jiàn”, which is used when people will meet each other the very next day. “See you Monday” in Chinese is “星期一见 Xīng qī yī jiàn”.

◦ A: Good bye .

Zài jiàn.  
再见。  
dsye gyan

◦ B: Good bye .

Zài jiàn.  
再见。  
dsye gyan