**Unit 1 Languages: Chinese vs. English**

**Section A The Chinese language**

**Passage 1** **Aspects of the Chinese language**

**Reading comprehension**

**1** 1 F 2 T 3 F 4 F 5 F 6 T 7 T

**2** 略

**Verbal expression**

**1** 略

**2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chinese | English |
| 看书 | read a book / do some reading |
| 吃饭 | have meals |
| 喝汤 | eat soup \* |
| 吃药 | take medicine |
| 坐车 | take / ride a bus |
| 开灯 | turn on a light |
| 写作业 | do one’s homework |
| 打电话 | make a phone call |

**\***If you use a spoon you're eating, if you're slurping it out of the bowl (or indeed mug) then you are drinking it.

**Critical thinking and cultural exploration**

**1 Wade-Giles: a [Romanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Chinese" \o "Romanization of Chinese) system for**[Chinese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Chinese" \o "Standard Chinese)

***Transcript***

Wade-Giles, sometimes abbreviated as Wade, is a [Romanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Chinese" \o "Romanization of Chinese) system for [Mandarin Chinese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Chinese" \o "Standard Chinese). It developed from a system produced by [Thomas Wade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Francis_Wade" \o "Thomas Francis Wade), during the mid-19th century, and was given completed form with [Herbert A. Giles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Giles" \o "Herbert Giles)’ *A [Chinese-English Dictionary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Chinese-English_Dictionary" \o "A Chinese-English Dictionary)* of 1892.

[Thomas Francis Wade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Francis_Wade" \o "Thomas Francis Wade), a scholar of Chinese and a British ambassador in China, was the first professor of Chinese at [Cambridge University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge_University" \o "Cambridge University). Wade published in 1867 the first textbook on the [Beijing dialect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing_dialect" \o "Beijing dialect) of [Chinese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandarin_Chinese" \o "Mandarin Chinese) in English, which became the basis for the Romanization system later known as Wade-Giles. The system, designed to transcribe Chinese terms for Chinese specialists, was further refined in 1912 by [Herbert Allen Giles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Allen_Giles" \o "Herbert Allen Giles), a British diplomat in China, and his son, [Lionel Giles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lionel_Giles" \o "Lionel Giles), a curator at the British Museum.

Wade-Giles was the system of transcription in the English-speaking world for most of the 20th century, used in standard reference books and in English language books published before 1979. It replaced the [Nanjing dialect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanking_dialect" \o "Nanking dialect)-based Romanization systems that had been common until the late 19th century, such as the [Postal Romanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postal_Romanization" \o "Postal Romanization).

[Tones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Chinese_phonology" \l "Tones" \o "Standard Chinese phonology) are indicated in Wade-Giles using superscript numbers 1-4 placed after the syllable. This contrasts with the use of diacritics to represent the tones in *pinyin*.

(199 words)

**2 Chinese names vs English names**

***Transcript***

Modern Chinese names consist of a surname known as *xìng*, which comes first and is usually but [not always](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_compound_surname" \o "Chinese compound surname) monosyllabic, followed by a given name called *míng*, which is usually mono- or disyllabic. Prior to the 20th century, educated Chinese also utilized a “[courtesy name](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courtesy_name" \o "Courtesy name)” or “style name” called *zì* by which they were known among those outside their family and closest friends. In general, using the given name connoted the speaker’s authority and superior position to the addressee. Peers and younger relatives were barred from using it. Owing to this, many historical Chinese figures — particularly emperors — used half a dozen or more different names in different contexts. Those possessing names identical to the emperors’ were frequently forced to change their names.

Although there are currently over 4,000 [Chinese surnames](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_surname" \o "Chinese surname) in use in China, a mere hundred surnames still make up over 85% of China’s 1.4 billion citizens. In fact, just the top three — [Wang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wang_(surname)" \o "Wang (surname)), [Li](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_(%E6%9D%8E)" \o "Li (李)), and [Zhang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhang_(surname)" \o "Zhang (surname)) — cover more than 20% of the population. Chinese given names show much greater diversity than the surnames. Given names are chosen based on a range of factors, including possession of pleasing sound and [tonal qualities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_tones" \o "Chinese tones), as well as bearing positive associations or a beautiful shape. A two-character given name may be chosen for each character’s separate meaning and qualities, but the name remains a single unit which is almost always said together even when the combination no longer means anything.

(238 words)

**Passage 2 Written Chinese: Character formation and the layout**

**Reading comprehension**

**1** 略

**2**

1 略

2

1) Horizontal strokes are written before vertical ones (eg, 十, 工, 土).

2) Left-falling strokes are written before right-falling ones (eg, 人, 八, 入).

3) Characters are written from top to bottom (eg, 亏, 李, 歪).

4) Characters are written from left to right (eg, 孔, 明, 村).

5) If a character is framed from above, the frame is written first (eg, 月, 凡, 同).

6) If a character is framed from below, the frame is written last (eg, 日, 国, 四).

7) In a symmetrical character, the middle is drawn first, then the sides (eg, 小, 永, 水)

3

1) [Pictographs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictograph" \o "Pictograph) (eg, 木, 日, 月)

2) I[deographic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideogram" \o "Ideogram) (eg, 上, 三, 下)

3) Compound ideographs (eg, 尘, 林, 休)

4) Pictophonetic characters (eg, 晴, 菜, 淋)

5) Phonetic loan characters (eg 难, 莫, 闻)

**Verbal expression**

**1** 略

**2 Is Chinese hard to learn?**

***Transcript***

**Reasons Chinese Is Easier Than You Might Realise**

1. Chinese has no verb conjugation

If you have ever studied a European language like Italian, Spanish or German you’ll know all about verb conjugation.

You know, the way the ending of every verb changes depending on who is doing the action and when they’re doing it.

It’s a nightmare and it drives language learners crazy!

Learning how to conjugate verbs is one of the most tedious and uninteresting parts of learning a Romance or Germanic language.

While Chinese admittedly has its own unique difficult aspects, the good news is that it doesn’t conjugate its verbs!

So you can kiss those verb conjugation tables goodbye!

2. Chinese doesn’t have different tenses

Thanks to a lack of verb conjugations, there’s also another major shortcut in Chinese — verb tenses.

Many languages have various tenses depending on the time, date, and even the feeling surrounding a past or future event.

Chinese, however, simply requires that you state the time period at which an event takes place at the beginning of the sentence.

From there, you can recount any event that happened in what English speakers refer to as “present tense” — which is the only one that exists in Chinese!

3. Forming questions in Chinese is simple

Do you ever feel like making a statement in the language you are studying is easy, but formulating questions seems much harder?

Well, that’s because it usually is!

In a lot of languages, asking a question requires you to change the order of the words and the inflexion of your intended meaning.

Thankfully, this is not much of a problem in Chinese, as all “yes” or “no” questions can be formed by taking a statement and simply adding a small particle “*mā* (吗)” at the end.

(301 words)

**Critical thinking and cultural exploration**

**1 Arch Chinese: A Chinese learning system**

***Transcript***

[Arch Chinese](http://www.archchinese.com/) is a premier Chinese learning system crafted by Chinese teachers in the United States for Chinese language learners at K-12 schools and universities. Designed from the start specifically for English speakers who have no or little knowledge of Chinese, it offers a rich set of features with a slick and easy-to-use user interface. The features of the system are distilled from user feedback and feature requests from the Chinese learning community. We also consult with Chinese teaching professionals, from preschools to universities, to incorporate their suggestions and ideas.

Arch Chinese has become one of the most popular Chinese learning systems in the United States and other English-speaking countries. Our ultimate goal is to provide a unique, high-quality learning system to help Chinese language learners from around the world to study fffChinese in a practical, effective and enjoyable manner.

Key features include:

* [Animated stroke order](http://www.archchinese.com/chinese_english_dictionary.html?code=56fd) for all the Chinese characters defined in the national standard character set of the mainland of China and [7,000 frequently-used characters](http://animation.archchinese.com/) in the traditional Chinese character set.
* Unlike other web sites, we provide high quality, native-speaker recordings for every character, every stroke of the characters, every word and every example sentencein the system. We strongly believe, for language learning, the learners should listen to authentic, real-persons’ voices, not machine-generated or synthetic voices.
* [Generate character writing worksheets with stroke sequences, radicals, English definitions and](http://www.archchinese.com/how_to_write_chinese.html?code=8bd7) *[pinyin](http://www.archchinese.com/how_to_write_chinese.html?code=8bd7)*in PDF format for offline handwriting practice. With one mouse click, you can generate beautiful worksheets for more than 100 characters at a time instantly. The worksheets are highly customizable. You can provide your own definitions in French, Spanish, German, or whatever language you prefer. It is great for Chinese language teachers and parents to create [Chinese teaching and learning materials](http://www.archchinese.com/worksheet_sample.pdf).

(292 words)

**2 Handwriting vs typing: Is the pen still mightier than the keyboard?**

***Transcript***

No one can say precisely how much handwriting has declined, but a British survey of 2,000 people gave some idea of the extent of the damage. [According to the study, commissioned by Docmail](http://media.cfhdocmail.com/2012/06/handwriting-dying-slow-death.html), a printing and mailing company, one in three respondents had not written anything by hand in the previous six months. On average they had not put pen to paper in the previous 41 days. People undoubtedly write more than they suppose, but one thing is certain: with information technology we can write so fast that handwritten copy is fast disappearing in the workplace.

In the United States they have already made allowance for this state of affairs. Given that email and texting have replaced snail mail, and that students take notes on their laptops, “cursive” writing — in which the pen is not raised between each character — has been dropped from the Common Core Curriculum Standards, shared by all states. Since 2013 American children have been required to learn how to use a keyboard and write in print.

Some states, such as Indiana, have decided to go on teaching cursive writing in school. Without this skill, they assert, young Americans will no longer be able to read birthday cards from their grandparents, comments by teachers on their assignments or the original, handwritten text of the constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

(223 words)

**Section B The English language**

**Passage 3 Aspects of the English language**

**Reading comprehension**

**1** 1 T 2 F 3 T 4 F 5 F 6 F

**2** 略

**Verbal comprehension**

**1** 略

**2** 略

**Critical thinking and cultural exploration**

**1 British English vs American English**

***Transcript***

Although English is the principal language in both the US and the UK, it differs in the two countries, primarily in pronunciation and vocabulary. For example, some words and phrases that are inoffensive in the US are offensive in the UK and vice versa. These differences are the butt of many jokes. As Oscar Wilde said in *The Canterville Ghost*, “We have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language.” Actually, whether you say motorway or highway, autumn or fall, *tube* or *subway*, you’d be understood on both sides of the pond. The same with the pronunciation, it can’t get you into deep trouble. But the following words can be the reason for **confused looks, embarrassed smiles, and genuine misunderstandings** between British and American English speakers!

1. Are you going to wear pants?

Whaat? Why are you asking about my underwear? And why the most confusing words are related to the most **intimate things**? So, an Englishman or Englishwoman wears pants under his or her trousers or slacks. An American wears underpants under his or her pants. If you want to be on a safe side, use the words: briefs, underwear and trousers, which seem to be understood well by everybody.

2. Get some rest or a bath!

When nature calls, you’d better not use a confusing word to find your way to the facilities. Here’s where the English help us - they are not afraid to **call a spade a spade**, so they use the word toilet. Public toilet is also called the gentsorthe ladies. Americans, surprisingly, tend to be more **discreet** about the topic and use the word bathroom, and in the public building — a restroom or men’s roomorladies’ room.

3. Meet me on the first floor

In the UK the floors in a building are numbered as follows: ground floor, first floor, second floor, etc. In the US, though, they start with the first floor, then the second, etc. Which logic is better? No idea, but I wonder how many people don’t get to their business meeting on time when it is scheduled on the first floor.

(357 words)

**2 Which English variety is Canadian English more similar to, British or American English?**

***Transcript***

Canadian spelling is a tug-of-war between the British and the Americans. Because Canada is bilingual, French may also have an effect. One example possibly influenced by French is the Canadian *eh*. The *eh* of Canadian English is not a Canadian invention; it is used in England and elsewhere, but it is used in more different ways in Canada, notably as an emphatic and to maintain conversational involvement: No kidding, eh; Thanks, eh; So I was going to the store, eh, and this guy cut me off. The truth of it is, though, that most Canadians will tell you they don’t say *eh* much, and it is more associated with less-educated speech.

The Canadian accent has a few signal features, and they, too, trace partly to the US and partly to Britain.

In general, Canadians tend to sound like Americans, especially depending on where the Americans are from. Sometimes Canadians use the same words as Americans in different ways: in Canada, if you *write a test*, you’re the one being tested, while in the US you’re the test maker. Sometimes Canadians use different words for the same things:  *apartment* for *studio apartment*, *runner* for *sneaker* or *running shoe*, *two-four* for a case of 24 bottles or cans of beer.

Some words refer to things Americans don’t seem to have: *toque* for a kind of fitted knitted hat; *Caesar* for a bloody Mary made with clamato juice.

These Canadianisms stand as evidence of the difference between Canadian and American culture. It is very important for Canadians to maintain that difference, even if people from Vancouver sound more like people from San Francisco than people from San Francisco sound like people from San Antonio.

(281 words)

**Passage 4 Spread of English and English language learning**

**Reading comprehension**

**1** 1 T 2 F 3 F 4 T 5 F 6 T 7 T

**2 (To be provided)**

**Verbal expression**

**1 “False friends” in English**

1 turn the table扭转局面, 转败为胜

2 in one’s birthday suit一丝不挂

3 skeleton in the closet家丑；不可告人的秘密

4 bring down the house博得满堂喝彩

5 pull up one’s socks鼓足干劲，奋起直追

6 Look out.当心。

7 You don’t say! 不会吧！（表示惊讶）

8 You can say that again. 没错儿。你说得对。

9 I haven’t slept better. 我睡得好极了。

10 You can’t be too careful in your work. 在工作上怎么小心也不过分。

**2 The how and why of language learning: An interview with Luca Lampariello**

***Transcript***

**Interviewer:** When I attended elementary and high school in Western Canada, children generally took French or Spanish (and sometimes German) classes as part of the school curriculum; however, they rarely were able to speak very well even after years and years of study in the classroom. What are your thoughts on learning a language strictly in the classroom rather than from immersing yourself in the cultural aspects of the speakers of the language you’re studying?

**LL:** I think that the problem is not where people learn, but how they learn. In school, students learn more **about** the language instead of just **learning** the language. Learning a language is a skill that you develop, and you develop it by doing it, not talking about it or analysing it.

Just to give you an example, people are taught grammar rules, but they don’t learn how to extract and understand grammar patterns through use and examples. This is how the brain learns and fundamentally students are taught to proceed in the wrong way.

The second key factor is that in school, competition replaces cooperation, which is a key element in learning. Students feel judged by teachers and compare their “performance” with other students. This has a disastrous psychological impact on the way they develop language.

Third, students just don’t see the point in learning a foreign language at school. They either choose a language course because they heard “it is cool to learn this language” or they just do it because they know they “have to” learn some foreign language at school.

**Interviewer:**Further to the previous question, how useful is it to go to a foreign country to learn a language? Can you achieve a similar level of fluency without leaving your home town?

**LL:** This is only apparently a simple question and it would require a long answer.

Let’s say for the sake of simplicity that once again where you are counts less in the long run compared with how you learn. Of course living in a ­particular country is a huge advantage, but this is true only if you are willing to learn the local language.

I know and know of people who have been living in a country for 40 years and speak the local language very poorly, and others who have only travelled around for a bit and speak foreign languages extremely well.

Nowadays you can literally surround yourself with any language and create a “bubble” around you. Living in­ a country will only boost your skills, but you have to be willing to make that happen. Going to a country alone won’t do much unless you are ready to throw yourself out there and learn.

(448 words)

**Critical thinking and cultural exploration**

# 1 What’s your English level?

# *Transcript*

1. **A levels: Basic User**

* **English Test A1** (Beginner)
  + Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
  + Can introduce him / herself and others, and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he / she lives, people he / she knows and things he / she has.
  + Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
* **English Test A2** (Elementary)
* Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance, for example, very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography and employment.
* Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
* Can describe in simple terms aspects of his / her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

1. **B levels: Independent User**

* **English Test B1** (Intermediate)
* Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
* Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.
* Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.
* Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
* **English Test B2** (Upper-Intermediate)
* Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his / her field of specialization.
* Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.
* Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

1. **C levels: Proficient User**

* **English Test C1** (Advanced)
* Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning.
* Can express him / herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.
* Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.
* Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
* **English Test C2** (Proficiency)
* Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.
* Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
* Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

(452 words)

**2 Body language**

***Transcript***

Let’s examine the cultural interpretations of three most common cross-cultural gestures.

1. The Ring

This gesture was popularized in the US during the early 19th century by the newspapers that were starting a craze for using initials to shorten common phrases. There are many different views about what the initials “OK” originally stood for. Some believe it stood for “all correct” which was regularly misspelled, while others say that it meant the opposite of “knock-out”, that is KO. Another popular theory is that it is an abbreviation of “Old Kinderhook”, from a birthplace of a nineteenth-century president who used the initials as a campaign slogan.

It’s obvious that the ring itself represents the letter “O” in the “OK” signal. The “OK” meaning is common to all English-speaking countries and its meaning is fast spreading everywhere due to American TV and movies, but it has other origins and meanings in certain places. For example, in France and Belgium it also means “zero” or “nothing.”

1. The Thumb-up

In places that have strong British influence, such as the US, Australia, South Africa, Singapore and New Zealand, the Thumb-up gesture has three meanings. It’s commonly used by hitch-hikers who are thumbing a lift; it is also an “OK” signal; and when the thumb is jerked sharply upwards it becomes an insult.

When Europeans count from one to five, they mean “one” with the index finger and “two” on the middle finger. In this case the Thumb-Up will represent “five.”

Being the most powerful digit on the hand, the thumb is used as a sign of power. It is also used, in combination with other gestures, as a power and superiority signal or in situations where some people try to get others “under their thumb.”

1. The V-sign

This sign is common in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, and carries an obscure interpretation. Winston Churchill popularized the “V for victory” sign during the Second World War, but his two-fingered version was done with the palm facing out, whereas the palm faces towards the speaker for the insult version.

Its origin can be traced back centuries to English archers who used these two fingers to fire their arrows. It was considered the ultimate degradation for a skilled archer to be captured and rather than be executed, have his two shooting fingers removed. The two-fingered sign quickly became used as a goading signal in battle by the British to show their enemies “I’ve still got my shooting fingers.”

In parts of Europe, however, the palm-facing-in version still means “victory.” This signal now also means the number two in some parts of Europe.

(437 words)