

Beginner Chinese Lesson (15 Minutes)

Section 1: What Is Chinese? (2 minutes)

Objective: Understand what Mandarin Chinese is and where it is spoken.

Chinese usually refers to Mandarin, the most widely spoken language in the world. Mandarin is spoken in mainland China, Taiwan, and Singapore, and by Chinese communities worldwide. Mandarin uses tones, meaning the pitch of your voice can change the meaning of a word.

Check Question: What makes Mandarin different from English when speaking words?

Section 2: Chinese Sounds and Tones (4 minutes)

Objective: Learn that Mandarin has four main tones.

Mandarin Chinese has four main tones and one neutral tone. For example, the sound “ma” can mean different things depending on the tone. The four tones are: high and flat, rising, falling then rising, and falling.

Check Question: Why does changing your tone matter in Mandarin?

Section 3: Saying Hello (3 minutes)

Objective: Learn how to greet someone in Mandarin.

The most common way to say hello in Mandarin is nǐ hǎo (你好). “Nǐ” means you, and “hǎo” means good. To be polite, you can say nǐ hǎo ma? (你好吗?) which means “How are you?”

Check Question: What does nǐ hǎo literally mean?

Section 4: Introducing Yourself (3 minutes)

Objective: Learn how to say your name in Mandarin.

To say your name, you can say wǒ jiào... (我叫...). This phrase means “I am called...”. For example: Wǒ jiào Anna. Mandarin sentences often follow a simple subject – verb structure.

Check Question: What phrase do you use before saying your name?

Section 5: Numbers 1 – 5 (3 minutes)

Objective: Recognize basic Mandarin numbers.

Here are numbers one to five in Mandarin: one: yī (一), two: èr (二), three: sān (三), four: sì (四), five: wǔ (五). Numbers are used often, so practicing them early is helpful.

Check Question: How do you say the number three in Mandarin?

Section 6: Review and Reflection (2 minutes)

Objective: Review what you learned in this lesson.

In this lesson, you learned what Mandarin Chinese is, why tones are important, how to say hello, how to introduce yourself, and how to count from one to five. These basics form the foundation for learning more Chinese.

Final Question: Name one new Mandarin word or idea you learned today.