

# *A Helping Hand*

Chinese  
Mandarin



THE BRITISH SCHOOL  
OF BEIJING, SHUNYI  
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

*Some information about  
our Chinese Mandarin  
curriculum and a few  
ideas to help you support  
your child at BSB*

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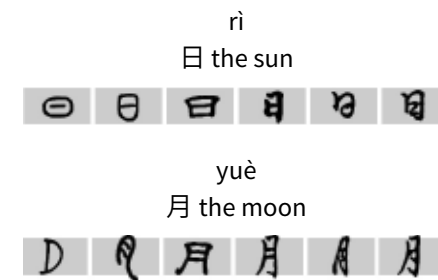
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Mandarin Chinese is spoken by 873 million people, making it the most widely spoken first language in the world.

Through studying the Chinese language, you will learn to understand the Chinese people and their culture. Despite the number of Mandarin speakers in the world, you will actually be developing a rare skill as you learn Mandarin, as it is not widely learned as a second language. There is likely to be more and more demand for people who can speak it, particularly as the Chinese economy continues to grow.

Chinese characters are a unique feature of the Chinese language. The characters originated from pictures. The history of their formation is very long, dating back to remote antiquity. Presently, roughly 600 Chinese characters are pictograms, that is stylised drawings, of the objects they represent. These are generally among the oldest characters. The following examples illustrate the evolution of Chinese characters through a long history.



A character is an individual written unit separated by a space boundary. Characters are monosyllabic morphemes and represent the smallest meaningful units in a word. Characters are constructed by individual strokes.

The Chinese language comprises of 50,000 characters, of which 5,000-8,000 are in common use. Students with a literacy of 1,000-1,500 characters would belong to the upper intermediate ability group at BSB. Students with a literacy of around 2,500 to 3,000 characters would be considered advanced learners and be able to speak, understand and write for different situations and in a variety of contexts.

At The British School of Beijing, students work to develop a good command of all four language skills: reading; writing; speaking; and, listening. Learning Mandarin will make our students better thinkers and we hope that both parents and students will also see that it is a fun and worthwhile activity.



## Mandarin in Primary

At BSB, Mandarin is taught at an early age. Children in Pre-nursery and Nursery class will receive a daily 20 minutes lesson of Mandarin taught by our Primary Mandarin teacher. Reception Mandarin lesson is taught for 30 minutes every day.

The length of the Mandarin lessons increases up to 3 hours per week in Primary school. Currently there are five different levels for Primary Mandarin. The Levels are: SET 1 (beginner), SET 2 (intermediate), SET 3 (advance), SET 4 (native) and SET 5 (native advance)

In Year 1 and Year 2 there will be only one native group to help the KS1 students to build their foundation.

### Curriculum

Children are divided in different levels depending

on their language ability. Our assessment tracking system will ensure the children to be taught in the correct level. Our Curriculum is designed to help all the language learners to perform highly in the class and also acquires the knowledge of Chinese culture.

We utilises the UK National curriculum framework for languages as a reference and because we are now an official HSK test centre, we are able to integrate the YCT exam standards into our curriculum to help the students start from level zero to their own success.

### Materials

At BSB we are committed to provide the best learning environment to our students. They will use different learning material based on the learning levels. But we are not only text book driven subject.

Instead, we combine an online learning platform, ICT materials, teacher designed activities and other interesting ways to help students develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing on a daily basis.

We chose Singaporean and local text books for native speaking students to support them with essay writing and reading skills. We will also encourage them to read more books to expand their vocabulary which will help them to get better in writing.

### Library Books

We have Chinese stories and guided reading books in the library. Teachers will choose the books for our students according to their levels. Some Mandarin groups will also borrow Chinese books weekly and read with their parents.





## *Mandarin in Secondary*

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are divided into ability groups depending on their language level.

Students who have never learned Mandarin before joining BSB will join our Beginners programme. This equips children with basic spoken expressions and minimum characters recognition, to allow them to function immediately in the new environment.

Students starting with a basic knowledge of Mandarin will join the advanced beginner group. Students with a more extensive previous

knowledge of Mandarin will either join the intermediate or advanced groups.

The beginner and intermediate groups will follow a variety of textbooks and will learn vocabulary and new expressions through topics such as self, family, colours, occupation, transportation, school, education and more.

Students in the advanced group follow the textbook Yu Wen. Lessons consist of intensive and extensive reading of descriptive articles, Chinese historical

stories, Chinese fable stories, classical Chinese poetry, narrative articles, fiction and non fiction and writing activities.

The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is aimed at developing the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Cultural programs, festivals and extra provision during after school activities engage students on a deeper level and allow them to appreciate and understand Chinese culture to make the most out of their time in Beijing.

## Mandarin (first & second language)

Cambridge exam board

Mandarin Chinese Course code: 0547

Chinese as a Second Language Course code: 0523

First Language Chinese Course code: 0509

Through learning Mandarin, students will become open-minded thinkers who are able to think in both western and Chinese ways and understand the Chinese culture. At BSB Shunyi students will develop the competences of speaking, listening, reading and writing in Chinese.

### Native Mandarin

2-year IGCSE Curriculum and the inquiry-based learning course. The students who have strong native Chinese proficiency can take IGCSE Chinese first language exam in Year 10. Therefore, students can take the Chinese course designed with the philosophy of IB and be challenged continuously. The students

who need more time to prepare have the option to take IGCSE Chinese first language exam in Year 11.

### Non-native Mandarin

The students who start to learn Mandarin at BSB before Year 8 and are able to achieve the objectives of IGCSE syllabus can prepare and take IGCSE at the end of Year 10.

So during the Year 11, those students will be prepared and trained by the inquiry-based learning approach required by IB Chinese B course.

Those students will be highly selective and have high motivation to continue learning Mandarin.

The students who start to learn Mandarin at BSB from Year 9 will be prepared and trained to take IGCSE exam in Year 11, in order to ensure they will have sufficient time to succeed.

The students who start to learn Mandarin at BSB during Year 10 may not be able to take IGCSE exam at the end of Year 11. For these type of students, Mandarin curriculum will focus on developing their three communicative skills: interpersonal, interpretative and presentational.

By the end of Year 11 those students will enter the HSK exam according to their language proficiency.

## IGCSE Mandarin Chinese (0547)

### Paper 1 - Listening 25%:

- 35 minutes
- Listening to a number of texts and answer questions
- 30 marks
- External assessment

### Paper 2 - Reading 25%:

- 1 hour 15 minutes
- Reading a number of texts and answer questions
- 36 marks
- External assessment

### Paper 3 - Speaking 25%:

- Approximately 15 minutes
- Completing two role plays, a topic presentation and a discussion
- 100 marks
- Internal assessment and external moderation

### Paper 4 - Writing 25%:

- 1 hour 15 minutes
- Responding to three writing tasks in the target language
- 45 marks
- External assessment

## IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language (0523)

### Paper 1 - Reading and Writing 70%:

- 2 hours
- Candidates complete three reading exercises testing comprehension and information transfer and two writing exercises.
- External assessment

### Paper 2 - Speaking 30%:

- 10–12 minutes
- Candidates complete a presentation, a topic conversation and a general conversation
- 60 marks
- Internally assessed/externally moderated

## IGCSE First Language Chinese (0509)

### Paper 1 - Reading 60%:

- 2 hours
- Candidates are required to answer two questions
- Question 1 – 25 marks Candidates answer a series of comprehension questions based on Passage 1
- Question 2 – 25 marks Candidates write a summary based on Passages 1 and 2.
- External assessment

### Paper 2 - Writing 40%:

- 1 hour 15 minutes
- Candidates are required to write one composition, 400-600 Chinese characters
- External assessment



## IB Diploma - Mandarin

### Years 12 & 13

The Diploma Programme is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitude necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

#### Language A: Language and Literature Course Content

Language and literature course are offered at SL and HL. It comprises four parts, two relate to the study of language and two to the study of literature.

- Part 1: Language in culture context
- Part 2: Language and mass communication
- Part 3: Literature-texts and contexts
- Part 4: Literature- critical study.

The course aims to develop in students skills of textual analysis and the understanding of the texts, both literary and non-literary. The course is designed to be flexible - teachers have the opportunity to construct it in a way that reflects the interests and concerns that are relevant to their students while developing in students a range of transferable skills.

#### Language B Course Content

Language B is a language acquisition course developed at two levels- standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) for students with some background in the target language. While acquiring a language, students will explore the culture(s) connected to it.

The core- with topics common to both levels-is divided into three areas and is required area of study.

- Communication and media
- Global issues
- Social relationship

In addition, at both SL and HL, teachers select two from the following five options.

- Cultural diversity
- Customs and traditions
- Health
- Leisure
- Science and technology

Also, at HL, students read two works of literature.

Through the study of the core and options at SL and HL, plus two literary works at HL, students build the necessary skills to reach the assessment objectives of the language B course through the expansion of their receptive, productive and interactive skills.

#### Assessment in the Diploma Programme

Both external and internal assessments are used in the Diploma Programme. IB examiners mark work produced for external assessment, while work produced for internal assessment is marked by teachers and externally moderated.

Please ask your teacher for more information and visit the IB website [www.ibo.org.cn](http://www.ibo.org.cn)



## HSK information

In the Mandarin Department at BSB Shunyi, we facilitate students to take HSK/YCT exams through assisting their exam registration, suggesting exam resources and providing advice on the exam preparation, in order for students to get the certificate used for their academic and professional future by means of assisting them to registration the exam

- the HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi)
- the YCT (Youth Chinese Test).

The HSK and YCT tests were launched by the Confucius Institute and designed by a panel of educationalists to better serve the learners of Mandarin Chinese.

The new HSK consists of a writing test and a speaking test, which are independent of each other. There are six levels of writing tests:

- HSK level I,
- HSK level II,
- HSK level III,
- HSK level IV,
- HSK level V, and
- HSK level VI.

There are three levels of speaking tests:

- HSK beginner level,
- HSK intermediate level, and
- HSK advanced level.

The YCT suits younger learners of Chinese (KS2 and Year 7 students) and consists of a writing test and a speaking test, which are independent of each other.

The writing test is divided into four levels:

- YCT level I,
- YCT level II,
- YCT level III,
- YCT level IV.

The speaking test is divided into the YCT Beginner Level and YCT Intermediate Level.

The table below compares the HSK levels to the Common European Language Framework.

New HSK	Vocabulary Chinese Characters	Study time (average)	IGCSE	CEF Common European Framework
HSK Level VI (L,R,W,S)	Over 5,000		IGCSE CIE First Language/ AS and A level	C2
HSK Level V (L,R,W,S)	2500	Over 2.5 years; 3-4 hrs/week		C1
HSK Level IV (L,R,W,S)	1200	2 years; 3-4 hrs/week	IGCSE Edexcel Second Language	B2
HSK Level III (L,R,W,S)	600	3-4 semesters; 3hrs/week		B1
HSK Level II (L,R,S)	300	1 year; 3hrs/week		A2
HSK Level I (L,R,S)	150	6 months; 3hrs/week		A1
	80	Less than 6 months		







The Mandarin department at BSB Shunyi compares the HSK standard to the National curriculum levels according to the following table:

KS2		KS3	KS4		KS5 IB	
N.C. Levels	HSK/YCT correspondence	HSK/YCT correspondence	N.C. Levels	HSK/YCT correspondence		
Level 1	YCT 1	HSK/YCT 1			Mandarin Ab ini	HSK-3/4
Level 2	YCT1/2	HSK/YCT 1/2	GCSE	YCT-3; HSK-2/3	Mandarin B SL	HSK-4/5
Level 3	YCT2/3	HSK/YCT 2/3	GCSE low set	HSK-2/3	Mandarin B HL	HSK-5/6
Level 4	YCT 4	HSK/YCT 3/4	GCSE high set	HSK-4		
Level 5						
Level 6	Native language levels	HSK 4				
Level 7	Native language levels	HSK 4/5				
Level 8- Exceptional performance	Native language levels	HSK 5/6				

Students at BSB will have the opportunity at the end of each school year to sit an HSK or YCT test and to acquire a certificate that will assess their Mandarin level against international standards.

For more information, please contact BSB Shunyi's Mandarin Department.

## How can you help at home?

How can you as a parent, especially if you are new to the language yourself, help your children to make the most of their Mandarin lessons?

There are various ways for parents to help their children in their studies, whether it is at the first stages of learning or encouraging them to further their knowledge with the study of Chinese literature.

Being in China does not automatically mean that you are immersed in Chinese culture, especially if you live in a compound where everything is on your doorstep and your friends are expatriates. Under these circumstances, your children, particularly in the younger age groups, will rely on your awareness of the potential opportunities and your

consistent encouragement to put them into situations where they speak and use Mandarin in a variety of different scenarios.

Here are some practical tips to make the most out of your time in China.

- Encourage your child to take part in at least one of the activities offered by the Mandarin Department throughout the year. These activities help children to build links with the wider local community. Check the website school calendar ([www.britishschool.org.cn/shunyi](http://www.britishschool.org.cn/shunyi)) and newsletters or ask your child's teacher for dates of these events. More information will be sent in the daily email.

- Ask to look at your child's Mandarin workbooks and take an interest in what your child has been learning.
- Let your child watch local TV channels. ICS, CCTV- 4 and CCTV-9 are English channels broadcasting Chinese news and culture items. OTV-children (哈哈少儿), CCTV-children (中央少儿) and OTV-cartoon (炫动卡通) broadcast cartoons and programmes for the little ones in Mandarin.
- Challenge your child to surf online to find more information about the topics they have learned in class. [www.youku.com](http://www.youku.com) is also a useful website to find videos and news in Chinese.

- Listen to Chinese radio stations and music.
- Ask your child to teach you what they have learnt in class; this is a great revision exercise. Use flash cards to help revise characters.
- If you or another family member can speak Mandarin, encourage your child to talk to you in Mandarin at home.
- Buy one or two good dictionaries. Contact your child's Mandarin teacher if you need a recommendation. An electronic dictionary is also very helpful and easy to carry in a school bag. Install a Chinese dictionary on the home computer that offers the "Chinese Reading" function. This function

will allow you to read Chinese websites with instant characters translation and this is a great way to learn new words.

- Set up a Chinese corner on your book shelf and fill this with anything Chinese: school books, Chinese readings, Chinese magazines and books on the language and culture.
- Initiate a daily routine for reading a Chinese book together. Ask your child to read aloud to you and explain to you the content of what she has read in your native language or in Chinese. Say, read, watch or listen to anything in Chinese for 15 minutes daily.

- You may wish to hire a private tutor for extra lessons. This can be an academic tutor or take the form of a babysitter who encourages interaction in Mandarin on a more informal basis. If you have academic expectations of this tutor time, make sure you know what is covered in the lessons and encourage your tutor to remain in close contact with your child's Mandarin teacher so we can coordinate learning across home and in school.



## *Practicing Chinese Mandarin outside the home*

There is much you can explore outside the home environment to encourage your child to speak and use Mandarin.

- Take advantage of any opportunity to encourage your child to take part in dialogues in situations like shopping, eating in restaurants or taking a taxi.
- Check to see if Mandarin language and cultural courses are offered in your community centre. Even if you are not keen to learn the language, it is always fun to try Chinese cuisine or to learn some form of Chinese art. This signals to your child that you are enthusiastic about learning new things and can be a strong motivator to encourage your child to learn Mandarin.
- Ask your child to read any characters they recognise on public signs. Learn characters with your child. Take photos of signs and check with Chinese locals or the Mandarin teacher that you have both properly understood these. Label your home furniture and objects in Chinese.
- Special events like festivals provide excellent opportunities to learn about Chinese culture and language in a relaxed and informal setting. Has a colleague at your workplace ever invited you to a Chinese wedding? Accept the invitation. Take your child with you and don't forget also to take a red envelope!
- Travel, travel and travel. Travel to a more remote area in China, to smaller towns where you have access to a lot more of the authentic language and traditional heritage. Your child's experiences will eventually help them to better understand the culture embedded in the texts they read in class.
- You can encourage your child to write for a variety of purposes such as emails to a Chinese pen-pal, postcards when on holiday and notes to teachers. They can help mum to write notes for the ayi, write fun short stories or make a decorative Chinese vocabulary book.



## *A final word*

In our experience, the most successful Mandarin students usually have parents who show a keen interest in and a positive attitude towards their new surroundings, the culture and the language and who maintain close contact with the Mandarin teacher.

If you are such a parent, you will see dramatic improvements in your child's progress.

Thank you. xie xie. 谢谢!



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