**LaGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE** | CUNY

# Mini-lesson in
# Mandarin

Chinese characters, known as *hànzì*, are logograms developed for the writing of Chinese. Unlike alphabetic scripts, Chinese characters represent words or morphemes (smallest meaningful units of language). Learning Chinese characters can seem daunting because they are not phonetically based. However, by understanding the basic components and the logic behind the construction of characters, learning them becomes much easier.

| Character | Pinyin | Meaning |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 我 | wǒ | I/me |
| 你 | nǐ | you (singular) |
| 是 | shì | to be |
| 的 | de | (possessive particle) |
| 爱 | ài | love |
| 学 | xué | study/learn |
| 校 | xiào | school |
| 书 | shū | book |
| 中 | zhōng | middle/China |
| 国 | guó | country |

Also, Mandarin Chinese is a tonal language, which means that the pitch or intonation used when a word is spoken can change its meaning. There are four tones and a neutral tone in Mandarin:

- 1: high and level: mā (mother)
- 2: rising, like you're asking a question: má (hemp)
- 3: starting mid, dips down, then rises: mǎ (horse)
- 4: starting at the top and sharply falls: mà (scold)
- neutral: light and quick: ma (a particle used for questions)

Here is a list of some interesting words in Chinese character, Pinyin, and English translation.

- 爱 (ài) - Love
- 朋友 (péng yǒu) - Friend
- 家 (jiā) - Family / Home
- 学习 (xué xí) - Study / Learn
- 美丽 (měi lì) - Beautiful
- 旅行 (lǚ xíng) - Travel
- 文化 (wén huà) - Culture
- 历史 (lì shǐ) - History
- 食物 (shí wù) - Food
- 大海 (dà hǎi) - Sea
- 自然 (zì rán) - Nature
- 城市 (chéng shì) - City
- 快乐 (kuài lè) - Happy
- 书 (shū) - Book
- 音乐 (yīn yuè) - Music
- 艺术 (yì shù) - Art
- 语言 (yǔ yán) - Language
- 电影 (diàn yǐng) - Movie
- 天空 (tiān kōng) - Sky
- 动物 (dòng wù) - Animal
- 运动 (yùn dòng) - Sport
- 教育 (jiào yù) - Education
- 健康 (jiàn kāng) - Health
- 笑 (xiào) - Smile / Laugh
- 梦 (mèng) - Dream
- 成功 (chéng gōng) - Success
- 友好 (yǒu hǎo) - Friendly
- 冒险 (mào xiǎn) - Adventure
- 思考 (sī kǎo) - Thinking
- 挑战 (tiǎo zhàn) - Challenge

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