

**Lesson Title:** Chinese Writing

**Class and Grade level(s):** 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Exploring Languages and Cultures Class

**Goals and Objectives**

**The student will be able to:**

The student will be able to:

1. Explain the differences between written and spoken Chinese.
2. Explain how the current Chinese writing system was created.
3. Identify and define simple Chinese characters.

**Time required/class periods needed:** 1 class period = 48 minutes

**Primary source bibliography**

The Chinese language <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/1000bce.htm#language>  
Pictures of the terracotta warriors of Qin Shi Huangdi and the Yellow River  
Chinese newspaper  
Map of China

**Other resources used**

<http://ce.linedict.com/#/cnen/home>  
<http://www.mandarintools.com>  
<http://www.creaders.net/>  
<http://kids.asiasociety.org/>  
<http://chinapage.com/>

**Required materials/supplies**

Projector and laptop  
PowerPoint presentation created by David Beal  
Internet connection  
Copies of a Chinese newspaper  
Handouts for students  
Small group flashcards to go with internet activity: man, king, ox, sky, star, sun,  
water, road house, city  
Large flashcards with Chinese characters (teacher's choice)

**Vocabulary**

Tonal  
Pictographs  
Romanization  
Wade-Giles

Qin Shi Huangdi  
Transliteration  
Pinyin

**Procedure**

As an anticipatory set, the teacher will hand out a copy of a Chinese newspaper printed from the internet. <http://www.creaders.net/>

1. The teacher will ask the students to identify the language. The teacher will ask what it says and if anyone can read it.
2. The teacher will hold a class discussion about the differences between learning German, French and Spanish and learning Chinese.
3. The teacher will distribute the handouts for note-taking. The teacher will present the PowerPoint as a way to guide the discussion. The students will complete the notes as the discussion continues during class.
4. The teacher will log on to <http://www.askasia.org/kids/mapgame.php> and have the students try to solve the Chinese language puzzle in small groups. Instruct the students to put the cards in the order that corresponds with the chart. **THESE**

**GAMES REQUIRE A PLUG-IN SO #4 IS OPTIONAL.**

6. As a closing activity, the teacher will show the students random basic characters on large flashcards and have the students guess at the meaning of each. This can lead into another discussion about pictographs (characters that look something like what they represent) and ideographs (characters that represent ideas).

**Assessment/evaluation**

There will be an open-note quiz at the end of the Chinese unit covering materials from the 8 days on East Asia.



What did Qín Shǐ Huǎngdi do for the language? - In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE...

How many Chinese characters or pictograms are there? -  
- But to be considered basically literate...

It would take a scholar \_\_\_\_\_ years to learn all of the characters.

What is transliteration? Transliteration is...

The system of transliteration of Chinese into \_\_\_\_\_ letters is the Pīnyīn system. It is \_\_\_\_\_. It was developed in 1957. (See next page.)

How is Chinese written? Chinese is written from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Because.....

What are the “Four Treasures of a Chinese Scholar”? --

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How are Chinese names written? Last names...

First names...

Because...

What are the pros and cons of Romanizing the Chinese language?

<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>

## Chinese Writing (worksheet key)

What is the difference between spoken Chinese and written Chinese? There are many Chinese languages. To name a few are Mandarin, Cantonese, Shanghaiese, Fukinese. Each of these languages has a different pronunciation of the written language. A Cantonese speaker can NOT understand spoken Mandarin.

All but two (Hui and Manchu) of China's 55 minority groups have their own language. 27 of them have written languages. 21 of these 27 use their own script.

The written Chinese language unifies the many spoken languages.

Yet, all use the same written language. Although they all speak different languages, they all read the same language. Spoken and written are separate. There is no way to sound out the written characters as they are "pictures."

What is the difference between a tonal and stressed language? Tonal – Word goes up or down to change meaning. There are more tonal languages in the world. Many Asian and African languages are tonal.  
What are examples of each?  
What are words that show differences?

"ma" = mother, hemp, horse, scold

Stressed – How a word is stressed changes the meaning. European languages are stressed.

"hot dog"

What is the "national language?" Chinese is the governmental language. The national language is the written language. Mandarin Chinese is the governmental language.

What "unifies" China? The written language.

How old is the Chinese written language? According to legend, the Chinese language is 4000 years old, although historians place a written language 8000 years ago. The current system was developed 3500 years ago.

What did Qin Shi Huangdi do for the language?

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE Qin (his last name) Shi (First) Huangdi (Emperor) (chin sher hwang dee) unified the written language. Before him, there were many written characters and forms of writing. He united all of the forms into one form... HIS.

How many Chinese characters or - 50,000

pictograms are there?

- But to be considered literate (read newspapers), you need to know 3000. These 3000 account for 99 percent of all the characters used on a regular basis. A well-educated person knows 6000.

It would take a scholar TEN years to learn all of the characters.

What is transliteration? Transliterations is writing the sounds of the words in Romanized letters. The system of transliteration of Chinese into Roman letters is the Pinyin system. It is an alphabet for foreigners to learn pronunciation. (See next page.)

How was Chinese originally written? Chinese was originally written from right to left and top to bottom. Because Chinese was first written on bamboo strips held together like a mat. If the strips were displaced or shifted up and down, it would not make a difference. Today, Chinese is written left to right, like English.

What are the “Four Treasures of a Chinese Scholar”?

- ink (stick)
- brush
- paper
- ink stone

How are Chinese names written? Last names are written first.  
First names are written second.

Because last/family names are more important. Confucianism shows a reverence for the past and family.

What are the pros and cons of Romanizing the Chinese language?

<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Easier for foreigners to learn Chinese</li><li>-Trade/financial benefits if foreigners can read/speak easier.</li><li>-Typing/computers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-China loses what unifies the many spoken languages that all use the same written language. Then China would just have many different languages that have nothing in common.</li><li>-Tradition. The written form makes it “Chinese”</li><li>- Change 1.5 billion people?</li></ul>