

Is It Possible to Learn Mandarin Quick... But Without Pain?!

by Yao Zhang

Mandarin Quick Learn is a unique program developed to help absolute beginner learn essential Mandarin in 30 hours.

Mandarin Quick Learn will enable you to communicate in real life, regardless of whether your purpose is to do business, to travel, or just to study out of interest. The vocabulary used is as 'everyday' as we can make it, and we apply it in situations which are common and natural in today's China. This course maintains the principle of teaching only what is truly essential for a firm grasp of practical, up-to-date Chinese.

The Chinese language branches out into eight major dialects, most of them so far removed from each other that they may be considered separate languages. China has been encouraging everybody to make use of one standard, universal Chinese language. In the West this language is referred to as 'Mandarin'. In China, we officially refer to it as the Pu-Tong-Hua 'Universal Language'. It is this language, that we will teach you. One area which we have not covered is the written language. To learn Chinese characters is time-consuming and laborious because they are not directly connected with speech. Let me explain why: The Chinese writing system frequently does not pretend to represent the sounds of the language. It uses symbols to represent the ideas being spoken, as much as the sounds by which those ideas are expressed. The snag is that while English only needs 26 letters to be able to write everything, no one knows all of the Chinese characters in existence. To begin with, start your learning of Chinese by discarding some of the ideas which you have about other languages. Don't look for tenses- there aren't any; don't ask how verbs conjugate - they don't; don't worry about gender; don't think about case- nominative, genitive accusative and all the rest of their friends don't exist in modern Chinese; say goodbye to irregular verbs, gender difference, subjunctives, singulars and plurals.

Chinese has 'measures', 'particles', and a series of 'word orders' which are really like mathematical formulae into which you fit your vocabulary. Sentences do not necessarily have a subject, conditions are always set out before the main business, and in matters of

time and place the larger always comes before the smaller (year before month before day; country before city before street before house number). You will find our program easy to absorb and that it is presented in a 'user-friendly' manner. In truth and in fact, Chinese has a simple construction and does not need a lot of grammatical jargon; you don't have to observe complex technicalities. What occasionally seems to be a grammatical problem is actually a matter of cultural difference. Some of our 'grammar notes' will appear more like explanations of the Chinese culture which you will gradually come to understand better as the course proceeds. What often alarms the beginner is the fact that Chinese sings its sounds in four different 'tones'. Don't be afraid, it's a problem soon overcome. Tones are important. However, Chinese has a very restricted sound range (only about 400 different sounds). Even so, the limited number means that many words have to share a sound. English, with a much larger sound range, does not escape the problem- think of to, too, and two, or pare, pair and pear- Chinese usually has more than three 'homophones'. Most Chinese words consists of one syllable; and an elementary dictionary of Chinese has no compound polysyllabic words, thus misunderstanding is avoided. Our program begins with the study of pronunciation and an explanation of the tone system which you will find easy to absorb and fascinating.

At the beginning of each session, you should spend 20 minutes recalling what you learned the day before. When you study a conversation, say it out loud if possible, try to think and understand even while you are mechanically repeating sounds. The exercises are designed to ensure that you remember what you have read and can apply it immediately. Our accelerated teaching system will greatly help to shorten the time you spend memorizing.

Congratulations! You are about to become one of that tiny number of Westerners who can converse with Chinese. And so, without further delay, let's get going. If you conscientiously follow our program and spend the required time, you will be able to communicate in Chinese with just 30 hours of training.