

Chinese 1 Simple Studies Review

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The Chinese language is based on characters. Each character is generally made up of one pinyin syllable. A pinyin syllable consists of an initial, final, and tone. The exception to this rule is that there are syllables that only have a tone and a final (excluding an initial.)

Chinese Characters:

- Chinese characters are symbols used for writing Chinese.
- Each character represents a block of meaning.
- Each character has its own set of meanings that, when combined with other character(s), give the meaning of an entire word.
- Each character follows a strict stroke order.
- Examples of Chinese characters: 给, 高, 热, 最

Pinyin:

- Is a phonetic transcription of Chinese characters that use the Roman alphabet to pronounce words, however pronunciation, and spelling of pinyin letters are different from English letters.
- Pinyin consists of two parts. The first part is called the initial: the first letter of a word (usually consonants.)
- The second part is called the final: the last letter(s) of a word.

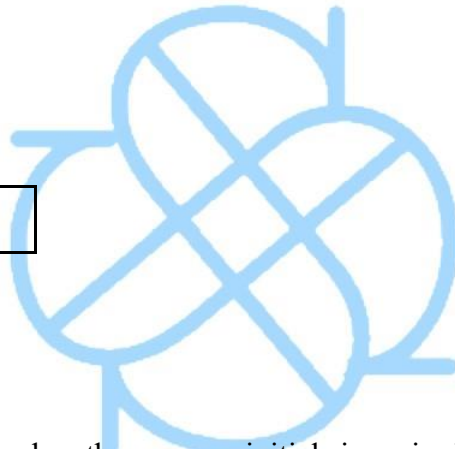
Basic Chinese Pinyin Alphabet Pronunciation

Simple Finals

b spent	p pole	m man	f farm	d stay	t talk	n now	l lemon
	g sky	k kite	h height	j jeep	q cheese	x sheep	
zh judge	ch chick	sh shop	r river	z kid s	c cats	s sad	

Formal Finals

y	w
---	---



“y” and “w” are place holders when there are no initials in a pinyin syllable.

- When “y” is connected to “i,” “y” is silent.
- When “y” is connected to “u,” “y” is silent and together they make an “ü” sound.
- When “y” is connected to “a,” “e,” or “o,” “y” is non-silent and sounds like “i.”
- When “w” is connected to “u,” “w” is silent.
- When “w” is connected to a, e, or o; w is non-silent and reads as “u.”

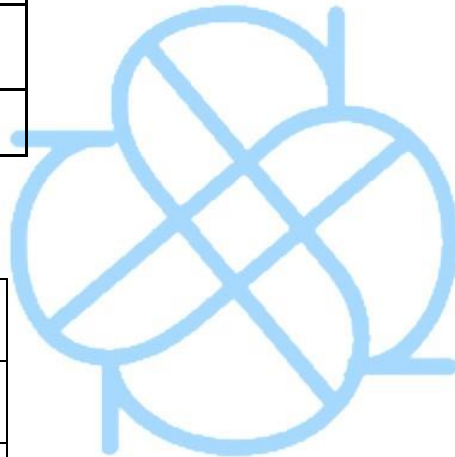
Simple Finals

a	o	e
---	---	---

father	law	ago
i bee	u who	ü ** as you make a continuous “ee” sound, round your lips into the position they would need to make an “oo” sound.

Compound Finals

ai	ei	ao	ou
ia	ie		
ua	uo		
üe			
iao	iou/iu	uai	uei/ui



Nasal Finals

an	en	in	ün
ian	üan	uan	un
ang	eng	ong	ing
iang	iong	uang	ueng

Special Final

e r	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always by itself • Can never be put after an initial
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Tones (5 in total:)

The Chinese language has many characters with the same sound, so it can be hard to differentiate the meaning of these characters while speaking without adding tones to these words. Tones marks are added to pinyin to indicate the Chinese word that is being implied while speaking to others.

1. First tone (flat tone ˉ)

- consistently flat like walking across a smooth surface.
- shown as a straight horizontal line above a pinyin final letter.

2. Second tone (rising tone /)

- consistently rises moderately like going up a hill.
- shown as a rising diagonal line above a pinyin final letter.

3. Third tone (falling and rising tone ˇ)

- falls and rises like riding a roller coaster.
- shown as a by a dipping line above a pinyin final letter.

4. Fourth tone (falling tone \)

- Goes down very rapidly.
- shown as a falling diagonal line above a pinyin final letter.

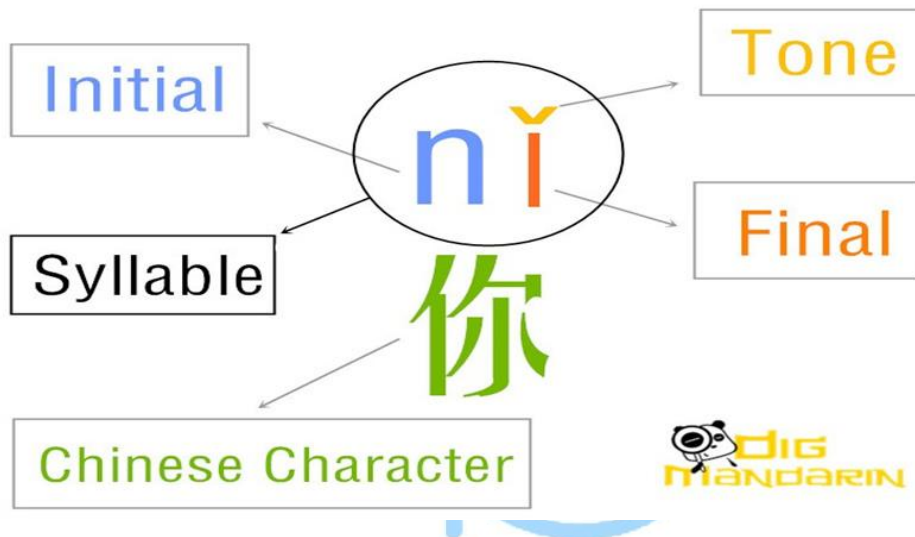
5. Fifth tone (neutral tone)

- relatively short and weak.
- there is no tone mark above the pinyin final letter.

Example:

tone	pinyin	character	meaning
1st →	mā	媽	mother
2nd ↗	má	麻	numb
3rd ∪	mǎ	馬	horse
4th ∨	mà	罵	scold
5th	ma	嗎	question

Overview of how all these components come to together to form characters



<https://www.digmandarin.com/learn-chinese-pinyin.html>

General rules for a Chinese sentence:

- The words “the” and “a” do not exist in Chinese.

- Never place a question word at the beginning of a question as you do in English unless the question word is the subject of the sentence.
- The word order remains the same in both statements and questions.

Subject+ Verb+ Object

Examples:

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|---------------------------------------|----|--|
| 1. | 我喜欢土豆。
Wǒ xǐhuān tǔdòu.
I like potatoes. | 2. | 他看书。
Tā kànshū.
He reads books. | 3. | 他是我的儿子。
Tā shì wǒ de érzi.
He is my son. |
|----|--|----|---------------------------------------|----|--|

Complex sentence structure for a Chinese sentence:

Subject+ adverbial (time/place/manner) + verb + object (receiver of the action.)

Examples:

Character: 李明天吃中餐。
Pinyin: Lǐ míngtiān chī zhōngcān.
Literal Translation: Li tomorrow eat chinese food.
Standard Translation: Li will eat chinese food tomorrow.

Characters: 李昨天下午三点半去看外国电影。
Pinyin: Lǐ zuótiān xiàwǔ sān diǎn bàn qù kàn wàiguó diànyǐng.
Literal Translation: Li yesterday afternoon 3:30 go watch foreign movie.
Standard Translation: Li went to watch a foreign movie at 3:30 yesterday afternoon.

Varying ways to ask and answer Questions

- A common way to form a question in Chinese is by repeating the verb or adjective in its affirmative or negative form.

Verb/adjective + negative + verb/adjective

Example:

Person A:

Characters: 你现在忙不忙？

Pinyin: Nǐ xiànzài máng bù máng?

Literal Translation: You right now busy not busy?

Standard Translation: Are you busy or not busy right now? / Are you busy right now?

Person B:

Characters: 我现在不忙。

Pinyin: Wǒ Xiànzài bù máng.

Literal Translation: I right now not busy

Standard Translation: I am not busy right now.

Person A:

Character: 你想不想看电视？

Pinyin: Nǐ xiǎng bùxiǎng kàn diànshì?

Literal Translation: You want don't want watch TV?

Standard Translation: Do you want or don't want to watch TV? / Do you want to watch TV?

Person B:

Characters: 是我想看电视。

Pinyin: Shì wǒ xiǎng kàn diànshì.

Literal Translation: Yes, I want watch TV.

Standard Translation: Yes, I do want to watch TV.

- Questions ending with 吗ma

Subject+ Verb+ Object + 吗

When 吗 is added to the end of a declarative statement, it turns it into a yes or no question.

To answer the question affirmatively, drop the 吗 from the end of the question.

To answer the question “negatively,” drop the 吗 and insert a negative adverb before the verb in the sentence.

Example:

Person A:

Characters: 你是老师吗？

Pinyin: Nǐ shì lǎoshī ma?

Literal translation: You are teacher ?

English Translation: Are you a teacher?

Person B: Answer 1

Characters: 我不是老师。

Pinyin: Wǒ bùshì lǎoshī.

Literal translation: I am not teacher.

Standard Translation: I am not a teacher.

or

VS.

Answer 2

我是老师。

Wǒ shì lǎoshī.

I am teacher.

I am a teacher.

- Questions ending with 好吗 (hǎo ma)

To ask for someone's opinion use, “好吗？” after stating an idea or a suggestion. People also use “行吗”, “怎么样”, “好不好” interchangeably with this as well.

Example:

Person A: 我们去你家，好吗？

Wǒmen qù nǐ jiā, hǎo ma?

Let's go to your house, okay?

Person B: 好！我们下次去你家。

Hǎo! Wǒmen xià cì qù nǐ jiā.

Okay! Next time we'll go to your house.

- Content questions that require real answers (who, what, where, when)

Question and answers use the same phrase order, so you can simply replace the question word with your answer when replying back to a question.

Example for questions asking “what?”

Person A

Person B

Character: 那是什么？

那是狗。

Pinyin: Nà shì shénme?

Nà shì gǒu.

Literal Translation: That is what?

That is dog.

Standard Translation: What is that?

That is a dog.

Example for questions asking “who?”

Person A

Character: 他是谁？

Pinyin: Tā shì shéi?

Literal Translation: He is who ?

Standard Translation: Who is he?

Person B

他是我的爸爸。

Tā shì wǒ bàba

He is my dad.

He is my dad.

Examples for questions asking “when?”

Person A

Character: 你的生日是什么时候？

。

Pinyin: Nǐ de shēng rì shì shénme shíhòu?

Literal Translation: Your birthday is what time ?
January first.

Standard Translation: When is your Birthday?

Person A

Character: 现在几点了？

Pinyin: Xiànzài jǐ diǎnle?

Literal Translation: Right now what time ?

Standard Translation: What time is it right now?

Person B

我的生日是一月一号

Wǒ de shēng rì shì yī yuè yī hào.

My birthday is

My birthday is January first.

Person B

现在是十一:二十一。

Xiànzài shì shíyī diǎn èrshíyī.

Right now is 11:21

It's 11:21 right now.

Example for questions asking “where?”

Person A

Character: 你去哪儿？

Pinyin: Nǐ qù nǎ'ēr?

Literal Translation: You go where?

Standard Translation: Where are you going?

Person B

我去图书馆。

Wǒ qù túshū guǎn.

I go library.

I am going to the library.

- Content questions that require “because“ as an explanation (why)

Example:

Person A :

Characters: 你为什么喜欢花？

Pinyin: Nǐ wèishéme xǐhuān huā?

Literal Translation: You why like flowers?

Standard Translation: Why do you like flowers?

Person B:

我喜欢花，因为它们很漂亮

Wǒ xǐhuān huā, yīnwèi tāmen hěn piàoliang.

I like flowers because they are beautiful.

I like flowers because they are beautiful.

- Important grammar to remember

The conjunction 那 (nà) then; in that case

那 connects two sentences together or links up the sentences by the two speakers.

Example:

Speaker A: 今天晚上没事。

(We have nothing to do tonight.)

Jīntiān wǎnshàng méishì.

Speaker B: 那我们去看电影。
)

(In that case, let's go see a movie.)

Nà wǒmen qù kàn diànyǐng.

The preposition and verb 给 (gěi)

- Can be a verb or a preposition.
- Prepositions are generally combined with pronouns to form prepositional phrases which appear before verbs and verbals.

Example of 给 in sentences:

1. 你请给我打电话

Nǐ qǐng gěi wǒ dǎ diànhuà

Please give me a call.

2. 你给我看一下，行吗？

Nǐ gěi wǒ kàn yīxià, xíng ma?

Can you let me take a look?

The modal verb 想 (Xiǎng) want to; would like to

- Has multiple meanings.
- Must be followed by a verb or a clause.

Example:

你想听音乐吗？

Nǐ xiǎng tīng yīnyuè ma?

Would you like to listen to some music?

要 (yào)

- Has many meanings.
- Indicates a future action particularly a scheduled event or an activity one is committed to.
- Should be placed in front of the action verb to indicate the future action.

Examples:

1. 我们下午要考试。

Wǒmen xiàwǔ yào kǎoshì

We are going to have a test today this afternoon.

2. 我要去我的朋友的家。

Wǒ yào qù wǒ de péngyǒu de jiā.

I am going to my friends house.

The adverb 别 (bié)

- Used to advise someone to refrain from doing something

Example:

1. 你别说英文。请说中文。

Nǐ bié shuō yīngwén. Qǐng shuō zhōngwén.

Don't speak English. Please speak Chinese.

2. 你别进来。

Nǐ bié jìnlái.

Don't come inside.

一下 (yīxià) and (一)点 (Yīdiǎn)

- 一下 Modifies verb
- 一点 Modifies object
- Following a verb, both 一下 and 一点 can soften the tone in a question or an imperative sentence making it more polite.

Examples:

1. 我和一点咖啡人。

Wǒ hé yīdiǎn kāfēi.

I'll have a small amount of coffee.



2. 你看一下，这是谁的照片？

Nǐ kàn yīxià, zhè shì shéi de zhàopiàn?

Take a look, whose photo is this?

The preposition 在 (Zài: at, in, on)

Person A: 你的朋友在哪儿。

Nǐ de péngyǒu zài nǎ'èr.

Where is your friend?

Person B: 他在学校。

Tā zài xuéxiào.

He is at school.

The particle 吧 (ba)

- Ba is a sentence final “suggestion” particle, often used at the end of an imperative sentence to soften the tone of the sentence.

Examples:

1. 我帮你把。

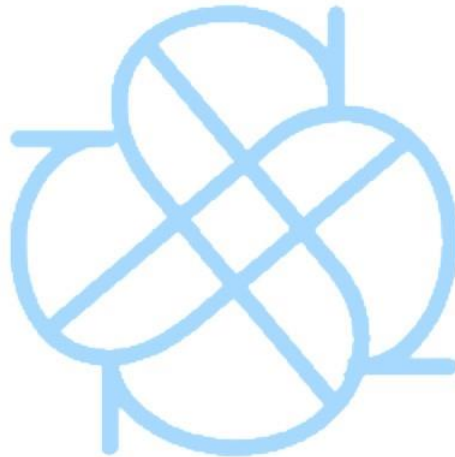
Wǒ bāng nǐ ba.

I will help you.

2. 你喝点茶吧。

Nǐ hē diǎn chá ba.

Have some tea.



The particle 了(le)

- Used to indicate past tense.
- Indicates that something has already happened or has been achieved.
- Placed after verb or at the end of a sentence.

Examples

1. 我喝了一瓶可乐。

Wǒ hēle yī píng kělè.

I drank a coke.

2. 你昨天晚上看书了吗？

Nǐ zuótiān wǎnshàng kànshū male ma?

Did you read a book last night?

Measure words:

- used to classify the type of object being discussed.
- generally is placed between a numeral and a noun.
- In English, we simply say “seven spoons,” but in Chinese, you would have to say “seven (measure word) spoons.”
- The most widely used measure word is 个 (gè), but there are many other specific measure words for different things such as people, vehicles, flat objects etc.

Examples:

1.

1 person

一个人

Yīgè rén

2.

1 pencil

一支铅笔

Yī zhī qiānbǐ.

More measure words

People	gè or wèi 个 or 位
Books	běn 本
Vehicles	liàng 辆
flat objects (paper)	zhāng 张
Long round objects (pens, pencils)	zhī 支
Rooms	jiān 间

Numbers

- **How to count in Chinese (#1-10):**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

零 一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十

Líng yī èr sān sì wǔ liù qī bā jiǔ shí

• How to count in Chinese (#11-19)

$10+1=11$ ⇒ 十一

$10+2=12$ ⇒ 十二

$10+3=13$ ⇒ 十三

$10+4=14$ ⇒ 十四

$10+5=15$ ⇒ 十五

$10+6=16$ ⇒ 十六

$10+7=17$ ⇒ 十七

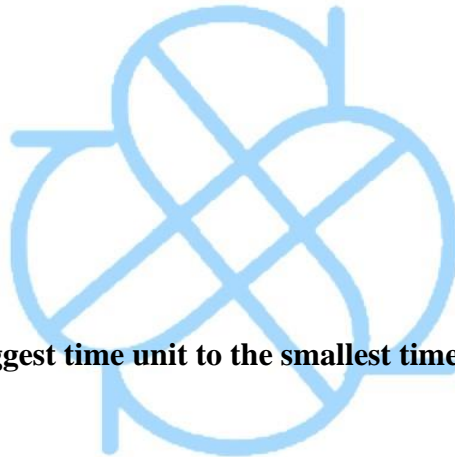
$10+8=18$ ⇒ 十八

$10+9=19$ ⇒ 十九

How to count in Chinese (20-99)

$10 \times 2 = 20$ 二十	$10 \times 3 = 30$ 三十	$10 \times 4 = 40$ 四十	$10 \times 5 = 50$ 五十	$10 \times 6 = 60$ 六十	$10 \times 7 = 70$ 七七十	$10 \times 8 = 80$ 八十	$10 \times 9 = 90$ 九十
$10 \times 2 + 1 = 21$ 二十一			$10 \times 5 + 1 = 51$ 五十一		$10 \times 7 + 1 = 71$ 七十一		
	$10 \times 3 + 2 = 32$ 三十二	$10 \times 4 + 2 = 42$ 四十二		$10 \times 6 + 2 = 62$ 六十二		$10 \times 8 + 2 = 82$ 八十二	
$10 \times 2 + 3 = 23$ 二十三				$10 \times 6 + 3 = 63$ 六十三			$10 \times 9 + 3 = 93$ 九十三
			$10 \times 5 + 4 = 54$ 五十四			$10 \times 8 + 4 = 84$ 八十四	
		$10 \times 4 + 5 = 45$ 四十五	$10 \times 5 + 5 = 55$ 五十五	$10 \times 6 + 5 = 65$ 六十五			
$10 \times 2 + 6 = 26$ 二十六					$10 \times 7 + 6 = 76$ 七十六		

	$10 \times 3 + 7 = 37$ 三十七					$10 \times 8 + 7 = 87$ 八十七	
		$10 \times 4 + 8 = 48$ 四十八					
					$10 \times 7 + 9 = 79$ 七十九		$10 \times 9 + 9 = 99$ 九十九



Time:

Always start off from the biggest time unit to the smallest time unit (from most general to specific.)

Example 1:

Characters: 我二零零三年二月十三号出生。

Pinyin: Wǒ èr líng líng sān nián èr yuè shí sān hào chūshēng.

Literal Translation: I 2003 March 13 born.

Standard Translation: I was born on March 13.

Example 2:

Characters: 我晚上八点零五分吃晚餐。

Pinyin: Wǒ wǎnshàng bā diǎn líng wǔ fēn chī wǎncān.

Literal Translation: I night 8:05 eat dinner.

Standard Translation: I eat dinner at 8:05 p.m.

- **Years**

Year (年) always follows the numbers referring to that year. Unlike in English, years in Chinese are pronounced one digit at a time.

Example:

2018	2019	2020
二零一八年	二零一九年	二零二零年
Èr líng yībā nián	èr líng yījiǔ nián	èr líng èr líng nián

- **Months**

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
一月	二月	三月s	四月	五月	六月	七月	八月	九月	十月	十一	十二月
Yī yuè	èr yuè	ān yuè	sì yuè	wǔ yuè	liù yuè	qī yuè	bā yuè	jiǔ yuè	shí yuè	shíyī yuè	shí'èr yuè

- **Days of month 号 (Hào:)**

Grammatical structure: _月_号

Examples:

June 22nd ⇨ 六月二十二号

April 2nd ⇨ 四月二号

March 17th ⇨ 三月十三号

December 30th ⇨ 十二月三十号

Monday is the first day of the week in China.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
星期一	星期二 xīn	星期三 xīng	星期四 xīn	星期五 xīn	星期六 xīn	星期天 xīn
Xīngqí yī	gqí'èr	qísān	gqísì	gqíwǔ	gqíliù	gqítīān

- Time of day

早上	zǎoshang	early morning
上午	shàngwǔ	morning
中午	zhōngwǔ	noon time
下午	xiàwǔ	afternoon
晚上	wǎnshang	evening or night

- Hours

1 o'clock	2 o'clock	7 o'clock	10 o'clock	11 o'clock	12 o'clock
一点 Yīdiǎn	二点 èr diǎn	七点 qī diǎn	十点 shí diǎn	十一点 shíyī diǎn	十二点 shí'èr diǎn

- Minutes

Key words:

半(bàn) = half an hour

Grammar placement: ___点半

Examples:

5:30 ⇒ 五点半

12:30 ⇒ 十二点半

刻(kè) = quarter of an hour

Grammar placement: ___点一刻, ___点二刻, ___点三刻

Example: 5:15 ⇒ 五点一刻

5:30 ⇒ 五点二刻

5:45 ⇒ 五点三刻

分fēn = minutes

Grammar placement: ___点___分

Examples:

3:13 ⇒ 三点十三分

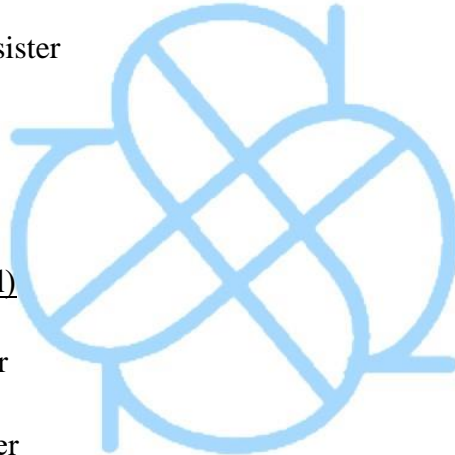
5:30 ⇒ 五点三十分

2:05 ⇒ 二点零五分

Family:

Immediate Family Members

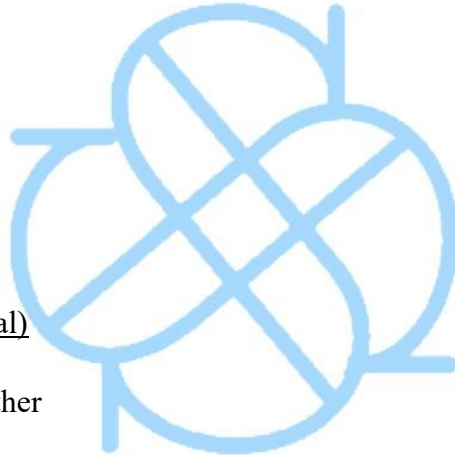
- 妈妈 Māmā Mom
- 母亲 mǔqīn Mother (formal)
- 爸爸 bàba Dad
- 父亲 fùqīn Father (formal)
- 哥哥 gēgē Older brother
- 弟弟 dìdì Younger brother
- 姐姐 jiějie Older sister
- 妹妹 mèimei Younger sister



Dad's Side of Family (paternal)

- 爷爷 Yéyé grandfather
- 奶奶 nǎinai grandmother
- 伯伯 bóbo dad's older brother
- 伯母 bómǔ older uncle's wife
- 叔叔 shūshu dad's younger brother
- 婶婶 shěnshe younger uncle's wife
- 姑姑 gūgū dad's sister
- 姑丈 gūzhàng husband of dad's sister
- 堂兄 táng xiōng older male cousin

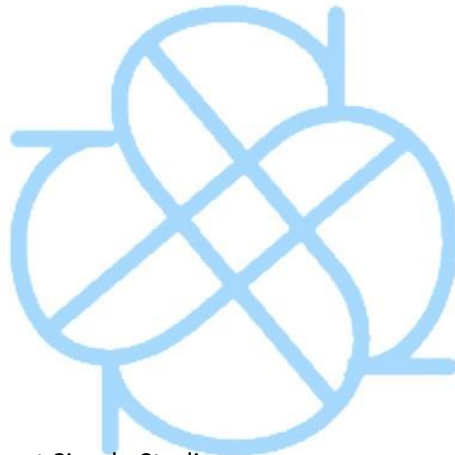
- 堂弟táng dì younger male cousin
- 堂姐táng jiě older female cousin
- 堂妹 táng mèi younger female cousin



Mom's side of family (maternal)

- 外公Wàigōng grandfather
- 外婆wàipó grandmother
- 舅舅jiùjiu mom's brother
- 舅妈jiùmā wife of Mom's brother
- 阿姨āyí mom's sister
- 姨丈yízhàng husband of mom's sister
- 表哥biǎo gē older male cousin
- 表弟biǎo dì younger male cousin

- 表妹biǎomèi younger female cousin
- 表姐biǎojiě older female cousin



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