

Free Hanzi Mini-Workbook

15 Chinese Characters That Suddenly Make Sense



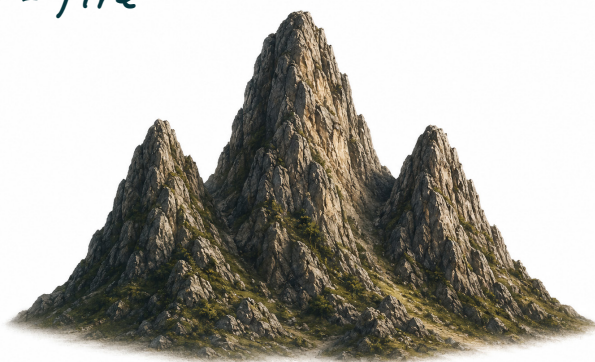
火

huǒ - fire



飞

fēi - to fly



山

*shān -
mountain*

Learn to recognize, remember, and write beginner-friendly Hanzi through simple visual memory hooks.

www.HanziMadeSimple.com

人 - rén: man, people, mankind

Radical: 人 - rén: person

Version: 1

Etymological Type: Pictographic

Structure: Single-component

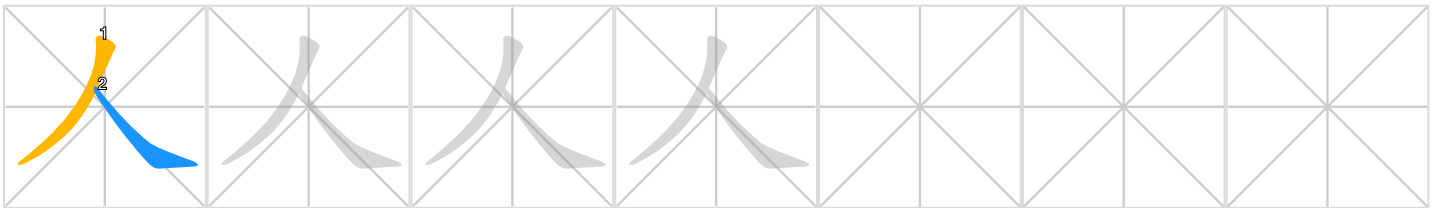
Components: This character is not made up of other components.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 人:

The character for people originates from a depiction of an actual person. You can still guess the two legs and the body, resembling a person.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 人

别人 bié•rén:
other people

别 bié, biè
separate, other

人 rén
man, people

Example: 她和别人不一样。Tā hé biérén bù yīyàng. - She is different from others.

病人 bìng rén:
patient

病 bìng
illness, sickness

人 rén
man, people

Example: 病人应该多休息。Bìng rén yīnggāi duō xiūxi. - Patients should rest more.

工人 gōng rén:
worker

工 gōng
labor, work

人 rén
man, people

Example: 工人们回家了。Gōng rén men huí jiā le. - The workers have gone home.

家人 jiā rén:
family

家 jiā, jia
house, home

人 rén
man, people

Example: 你的家人好吗? Nǐ de jiā rén hǎo ma? - How is your family?

老人 lǎo rén:
old person, senior

老 lǎo
old, aged

人 rén
man, people

Example: 那个老人很健康。Nà ge lǎo rén hěn jiàn kāng. - That old man is very healthy.

男人 nán rén:
man

男 nán
male, man

人 rén
man, people

Example: 那个男人在哪里? Nà ge nán rén zài nǎlǐ? - Where is that man?

女人 nǚ rén:
woman

女 nǚ
woman, girl

人 rén
man, people

Example: 那个女人很漂亮。Nà ge nǚ rén hěn piàoliang. - That woman is very beautiful.

从 - cóng: from, by, since

Radical: 人 - rén: person

Version: 亻

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 亻人人

Components of 从:

Memory Cue:

人

rén
man

The character for people originates from a depiction of an actual person. You can still guess the two legs and the body, resembling a person.

人

rén
man

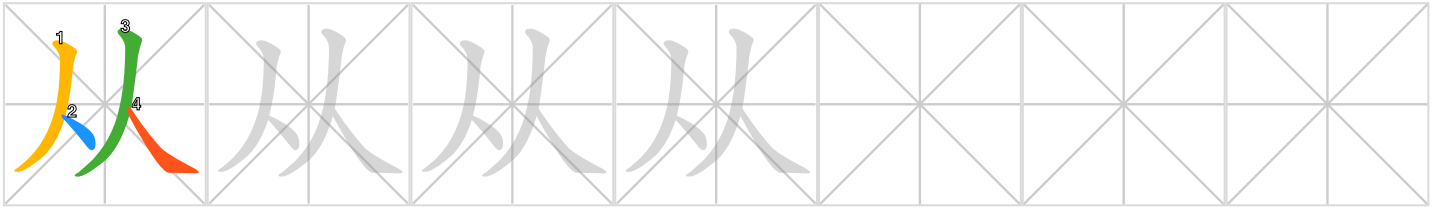
See above



A mnemonic story to remember the character 从:

Two inseparable friends (人) embarked on a journey from their town, earning the nickname 'The Duo'. Their adventure, symbolizing movement from 'one place to another, mirrored the essence of 'from' (从).

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 从

从 cóng:
from

Example: 从这里到学校要五分钟。Cóng zhèlǐ dào xuéxiào yào wǔ fēnzhōng. - It takes five minutes to get from here to the school.

休 - xiū: rest, stop, retire

Radical: 人 - rén: person

Version: 亻

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 亻 木

Components of 休:

亻

version of 人 - rén
man

木

mù
tree

Memory Cue:

The character for people originates from a depiction of an actual person. You can still guess the two legs and the body, resembling a person.

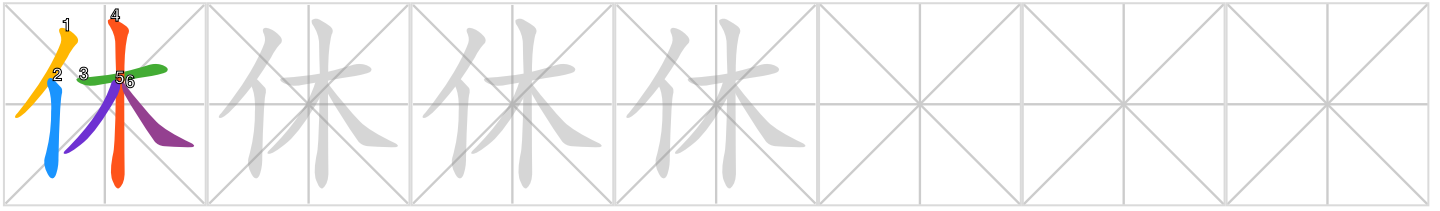
The character can easily be recognized as a pictograph of a tree. You see the trunk in the center and the branches spreading to the sides.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 休:

Once there was a tired man (亻) who decided to take a break and rest under a shady tree (木). He closed his eyes and relaxed, feeling the peaceful moment of retirement (休)

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 休

休息 xiūxi:
to rest

休 xiū
rest, stop

息 xī
rest, put stop to

Example: 你想休息吗? Nǐ xiǎng xiūxi ma? - Do you want to rest?

坐 - zuò: sit, seat, ride

Radical: 土 - tǔ: earth

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 人从土

Components of 坐:

人

rén
man

人

rén
man

土

tǔ
soil

Memory Cue:

The character for people originates from a depiction of an actual person. You can still guess the two legs and the body, resembling a person.

See above

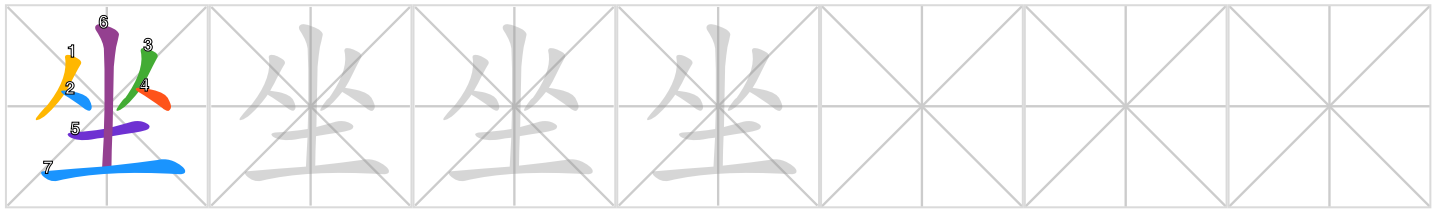
In Christian countries, it used to be a practice to put up a cross whenever an explorer reaches the peak of a mountain or discovers uncharted territory. In this character you can picture a cross standing on solid earth



A mnemonic story to remember the character 坐:

Two men (人) sat (坐) on the solid earth (土), resting after a long journey. They looked up at the sky and felt grateful for the seat (坐) beneath them

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 坐

请坐 qǐng zuò:
please sit down

请 qǐng
ask, request

坐 zuò
sit, seat

Example: 请坐下。Qǐng zuò xià. - Please sit down.

坐下 zuò xià:
to sit down

坐 zuò
sit, seat

下 xià
under, underneath

Example: 我们坐下吃个苹果吧。Wǒmen zuò xià chī gè píngguǒ ba. - Let's sit down and eat an apple.

小 - xiǎo: small, tiny, insignificant

Radical: 小 - xiǎo: small

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: Single-component

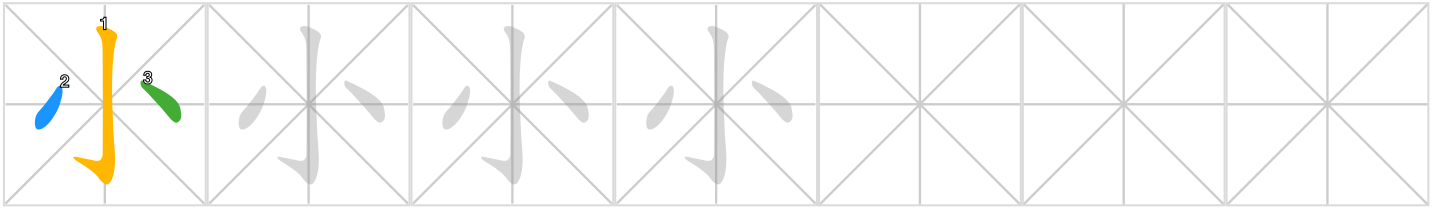
Components: This character is not made up of other components.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 小:

This character looks like a person that sits on bended legs, arms to the left and right. This is making it appear very small.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 小

小孩儿 xiǎo hái:
child

小 xiǎo
small, tiny

孩 hái
baby, child

儿 ér
son, child

Example: 你有小孩儿吗? Nǐ yǒu xiǎo hái er ma? - Do you have children?

小朋友 xiǎo péng
yǒu:
kids, children

小 xiǎo
small, tiny

朋 péng
friend, pal

友 yǒu
friend, companion

Example: 这个小朋友很漂亮。Zhè ge xiǎo péngyǒu hěn piàoliang. - This child is very pretty.

小学 xiǎo xué:
primary school

小 xiǎo
small, tiny

学 xué
learning, knowledge

Example: 她在小学教书。Tā zài xiǎoxué jiāoshū. - She teaches in elementary school.

小学生 xiǎo xué
shēng:
elementary school
student

小 xiǎo
small, tiny

学 xué
learning, knowledge

生 shēng
life, living

Example: 那个小学生很高。Nà ge xiǎo xué shēng hěn gāo. - That elementary school student is tall.

小姐 xiǎojiě:
miss

小 xiǎo
small, tiny

姐 jiě
elder sister, young lady

Example: 这位小姐姓赵。Zhè wèi xiǎojiě xìng zhào. - This young lady's surname is Zhao.

小时 xiǎoshí:
hour

小 xiǎo
small, tiny

时 shí
time, season

Example: 你每天睡觉几个小时? Nǐ měitiān shuìjiào jǐ ge xiǎoshí? - How many hours do you sleep every day?

中 - zhōng, zhòng: central, center, middle

Radical: 丨 - shù: line

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 口 丨

Components of 中:

Memory Cue:

口

kǒu
mouth

Imagine a wide opened mouth.

丨

gǔn
line

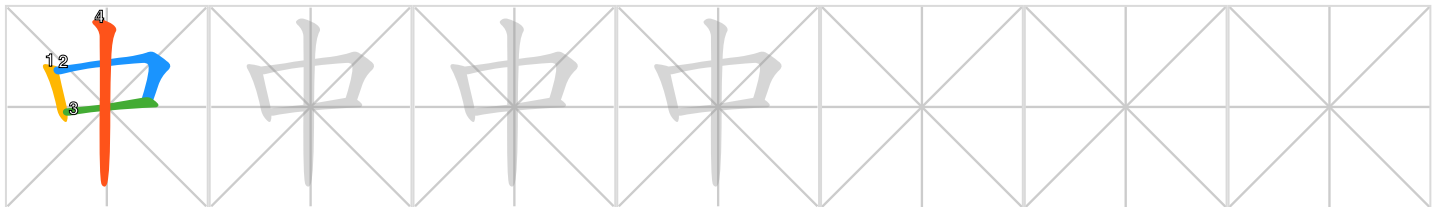
Just a simple vertical line.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 中:

In the center of the town square (中) was a tall statue (丨). Every day, people gathered around to chat (口), making it the town's favorite meeting spot - right in the middle.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 中

中学 zhōng xué:
middle school

中 zhōng, zhòng
central, center

学 xué
learning, knowledge

Example: 他在中学教书。Tā zài zhōngxué jiāoshū. - He teaches in a high school.

中学生 zhōng xué
shēng:
middle school stu-
dent

中 zhōng, zhòng
central, center

学 xué
learning, knowledge

生 shēng
life, living

Example: 那个中学生很年轻。Nàge zhōngxuéshēng hěn niánqīng. - That high school student is very young.

中国 zhōngguó:
China

中 zhōng, zhòng
central, center

国 guó
nation, country

Example: 你喜欢中国吗? Nǐ xǐhuān zhōngguó ma? - Do you like China?

中间 zhōngjiān:
middle

中 zhōng, zhòng
central, center

间 jiān, jiàn
midpoint, space

Example: 我的车停在中间。Wǒ de chē tíng zài zhōng jiān. - My car is parked in the middle.

中文 zhōngwén:
Chinese

中 zhōng, zhòng
central, center

文 wén
literature, culture

Example: 你会说中文吗? Nǐ huì shuō zhōngwén ma? - Do you speak Chinese?

中午 zhōngwǔ:
noon

中 zhōng, zhòng
central, center

午 wǔ
noon

Example: 中午我们一起吃午饭吧! Zhōngwǔ wǒmen yìqǐ chī wǔfàn ba! - Let 's have lunch together at noon!

火 - huǒ: fire, flame, burn

Radical: 火 - huǒ: fire

Version: 灬

Etymological Type: Pictographic

Structure: Single-component

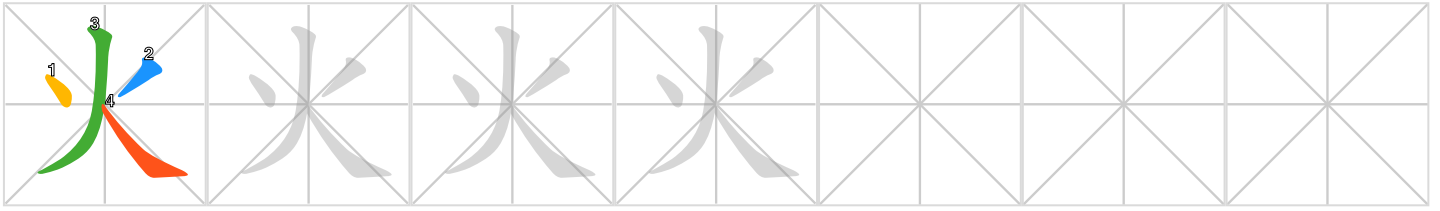
Components: This character can not be broken down into further components.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 火:

Here is an image of an actual fire, a character dating back around two thousand years. You can see the logs piled up to a triangle in the center and the flames rising from it.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 火

火车 huǒ chē:
train

火 huǒ
fire, flame

车 chē, jū
cart, vehicle

Example: 我坐火车回家。 Wǒ zuò huǒchē huí jiā. - I take the train back home.

雨 - yǔ: rain, rainy

Radical: 雨 - yǔ: rain

Etymological Type: Pictographic

Structure: Single-component

Components: This character can not be broken down into further components.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 雨:

Think of a window through which you can see the rain pouring outside.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 雨

下雨 xià yǔ:
to rain

下 xià
under, underneath

雨 yǔ
rain, rainy

Example: 明天会下雨。Míngtiān huì xià yǔ. - It will rain tomorrow.

飞 - fēi: fly, go quickly, dart

Radical: 乙 - yǐ: second

Version: 乙 乙

Etymological Type: Pictographic

Structure: Single-component

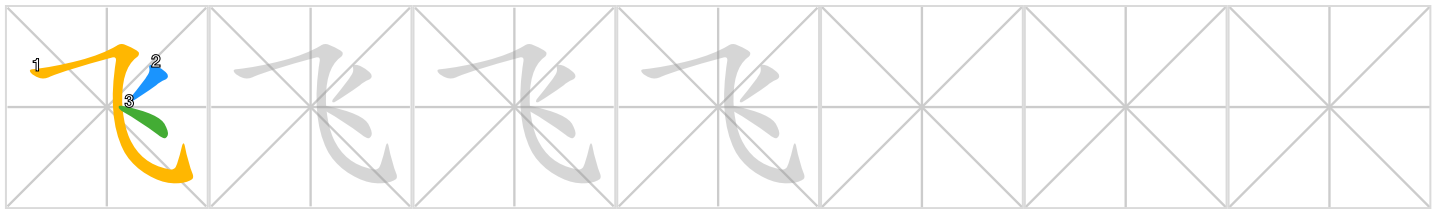
Components: This character can not be broken down into further components.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 飞:

A hummingbird has a long, pointy beak, two wings and a curved tail. Its silhouette looks just like this character. And just like the hummingbird it also stands for flying and quick movement.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 飞

飞机 fēijī:
aircraft

飞 fēi
fly, go quickly

机 jī
desk, machine, machine

Example: 他想买一个飞机。Tā xiǎng mǎi yī gè fēijī. - He wants to buy an airplane.

东 - dōng: east, eastern, eastward

Radical: 一 - yī: one

Etymological Type: Pictographic

Structure: 七 小

Components of 东:

七

qī
seven

小

xiǎo
small

Memory Cue:

When you turn this character upside down it looks like the hand-written Arabic number 7, at least how it's written in most parts of Europe.

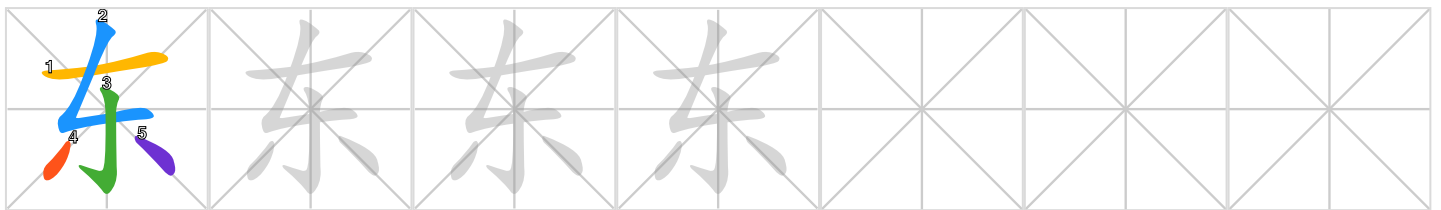
This character looks like a person that sits on bended legs, arms to the left and right. This is making it appear very small.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 东:

Seven (七) adventurous dwarfs (小) decided to explore the forest eastward (东). With excitement, they journeyed into the sunrise, each small figure eager to discover the wonders of the east.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 东

东边 dōng biān:
east side

东 dōng
east, eastern

边 biān
edge, margin

Example: 房子的东边有一扇窗户。Fángzi de dōngbiān yǒu yī shàn chuānghu. - There is a window on the east side of the house.

东西 dōngxi:
thing

东 dōng
east, eastern

西 xī
west(ern), westward

Example: 他买了很多东西。- 他买了很多东西。Tā mǎi le hěn duō dōngxi. - He bought a lot of things.

好 - hǎo, hào: good, excellent, fine

Radical: 女 - nǚ: woman

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 女 + 子

Components of 好:

Memory Cue:

女 nǚ
woman

子 zǐ
offspring

This character also looks like a stick figure with spread arms, but one that is a little curvier – just like a pictograph of a woman as it is frequently depicted in many societies.

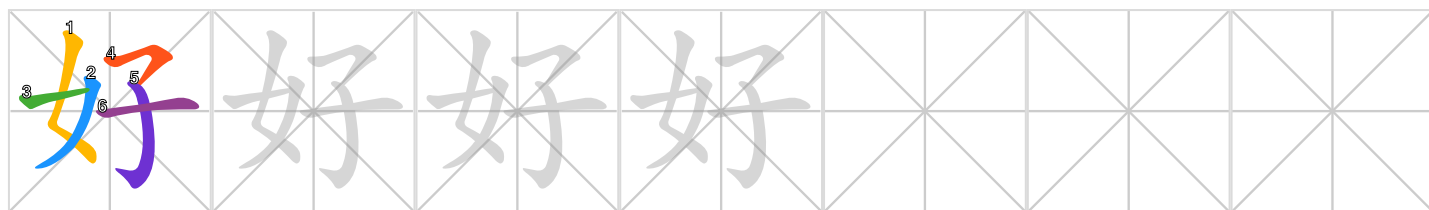
Imagine a child with a big head and stretched out arms crying for help.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 好:

A mother (女) with open arms embraced her child (子), their joy and love reflecting the essence of 'good' and 'fine'.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 好

爱好 ài hào:
hobby

爱 ài
love, be fond of

好 hǎo, hào
good, excellent

Example: 你的爱好是什么? Nǐ de àihào shì shénme? - What is your hobby?

好看 hǎo kàn:
good looking

好 hǎo, hào
good, excellent

看 kān, kàn
to look, to see

Example: 这个漂亮吗? Zhè ge piàoliang ma? - Is this pretty?

好听 hǎo tīng:
nice

好 hǎo, hào
good, excellent

听 tīng
hear, understand

Example: 这个音乐好听吗? Zhè ge yīnyuè hǎotīng ma? - Is this music good?

好玩儿 hǎo wánr:
fun; interesting

好 hǎo, hào
good, excellent

玩 wán
play with, joke

儿 ér
son, child

Example: 这个游戏真好玩儿。Zhè gè yóu xì zhēn hǎo wánr. - This game is really fun.

好吃 hǎo chī:
tasty

好 hǎo, hào
good, excellent

吃 chī
eat, drink

Example: 这蛋糕真好吃。Zhè dàngāo zhēn hǎo chī. - This cake is really delicious.

最好 zuì hǎo:
the best; favorite

最 zuì
most, extremely

好 hǎo, hào
good, excellent

Example: 你最喜欢的水果是什么? Nǐ zuì hǎo chī de shuǐguǒ shì shénme? - What is your favorite fruit to eat?

男 - nán: male, man, son

Radical: 田 - tián: field

Symbol for field or land. Used in farming or geographic terms.

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 田力

Components of 男:

Memory Cue:

田

tián
field

Think of an agricultural field from above.

力

lì
power

A clenched fist striking in an upward hook with a lot of power.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 男:

In the field (田), a strong power (力) emerged. It was a determined man (男), ready to work hard and provide for his family. With his strength and dedication, he was admired by all.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 男

男孩儿 nán hái:
boy

男 nán
male, man

孩 hái
baby, child

儿 ér
son, child

Example: 这个男孩儿很帅。 Zhè ge nán hái er hěn shuài. - This boy is very handsome.

男朋友 nán péng yǒu: 男 nán
boyfriend male, man

朋 péng
friend, pal

友 yǒu
friend, companion

Example: 她有没有男朋友? Tā yǒu méiyǒu nán péngyǒu? - Does she have a boyfriend?

男人 nán rén:
man

男 nán
male, man

人 rén
man, people

Example: 那个男人在哪里? Nà ge nán rén zài nǎlǐ? - Where is that man?

男生 nán shēng:
boy

男 nán
male, man

生 shēng
life, living

Example: 那个男生很高。 Nà ge nán shēng hěn gāo. - That boy is tall.

明 - míng: bright, light, brilliant

Radical: 日 - rì: sun

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 左右 日月

Components of 明:

Memory Cue:

日

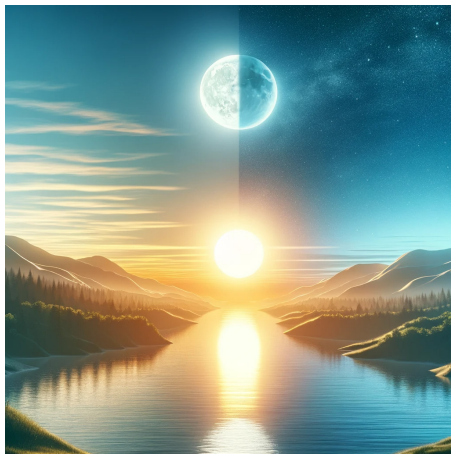
rì
sun

Think of a pictograph of the sun. An outline with something in the center, representing the star and its burning halo. Clearly, the sun only shines during the day.

月

yuè
moon

Like the sun, the moon is also a sphere in the sky that seems to emit light. But unlike the sun it's not always a full circle. The extensions at the bottom indicate the sickle of the moon. Because the moon takes around four weeks to go around earth, the character also means month.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 明:

As day turned to night, the sun (日) set, leaving a warm glow, while the moon (月) rose, casting a soft light, both shining bright in their own way.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 明

明年 míng nián:
next year

明 míng
bright, light

年 nián
year, age

Example: 他明年要结婚。 Tā míng nián yào jié hūn. - He is getting married next year.

明白 míngbai:
to understand

明 míng
bright, light

白 bái
white, pure

Example: 我不明白。Wǒ bù míngbái. - I don't understand.

明天 míngtiān:
tomorrow

明 míng
bright, light

天 tiān
sky, heaven

Example: 明天再见。Míngtiān zàijiàn. - See you tomorrow.

问 - wèn: to ask about, to inquire after

Radical: 门 - mén: gate

Etymological Type: Pictophonetic

Phonetic component: 问 - mén: door, gate Semantic component: 口 - kǒu: mouth

Structure: 门口

Components of 问:

Memory Cue:

门

mén
gate

A doorway with a sign above it.

口

kǒu
mouth

Imagine a wide opened mouth.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 问:

At the open gate (门), a person stood, mouth (口) open in query, seeking knowledge beyond the threshold.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 问

请问 qǐng wèn:
excuse me

请 qǐng
ask, request

问 wèn
to ask about, to inquire
after

Example: 请问这是什么? Qǐngwèn zhè shì shénme? - Excuse me, what is this?

看 - kān, kàn: to look, to see, to examine

Radical: 目 - mù: eye

Etymological Type: Ideographic

Structure: 目手目

Components of 看:

Memory Cue:

𠂇

version of 手 - shǒu
hand

If you take your right hand and hold it horizontally in front of you, it looks like this character, with the exception, that it has only three fingers.

目

mù
eye

This character is a stylized picture of an eye. Since there are no circles in Chinese letters, the outer shape of the eye is a box. Inside we see the iris, also indicated by a little box.



A mnemonic story to remember the character 看:

In a quiet room, a detective peered through his magnifying glass. His hand (𠂇) steadied the glass, while his keen eye (目) focused on the evidence. Each glance was an exercise in looking, seeing, and examining (看) the details before him.

Stroke Order and Writing Practice



HSK 1 Words with 看

好看 hǎo kàn: good looking	好 hǎo, hào good, excellent	看 kān, kàn to look, to see
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Example: 这个漂亮吗? Zhè ge piàoliang ma? - Is this pretty?

看病 kàn bìng: to see a doctor	看 kān, kàn to look, to see	病 bìng illness, sickness
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Example: 我要去看病。Wǒ yào qù kàn bìng. - I want to go see the doctor.

看到 kàn dào: saw	看 kān, kàn to look, to see	到 dào to go to, to arrive
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Example: 你看到了吗? 我看到了。Nǐ kàn dào le ma? wǒ kàn dào le. - Did you see it? I saw it.

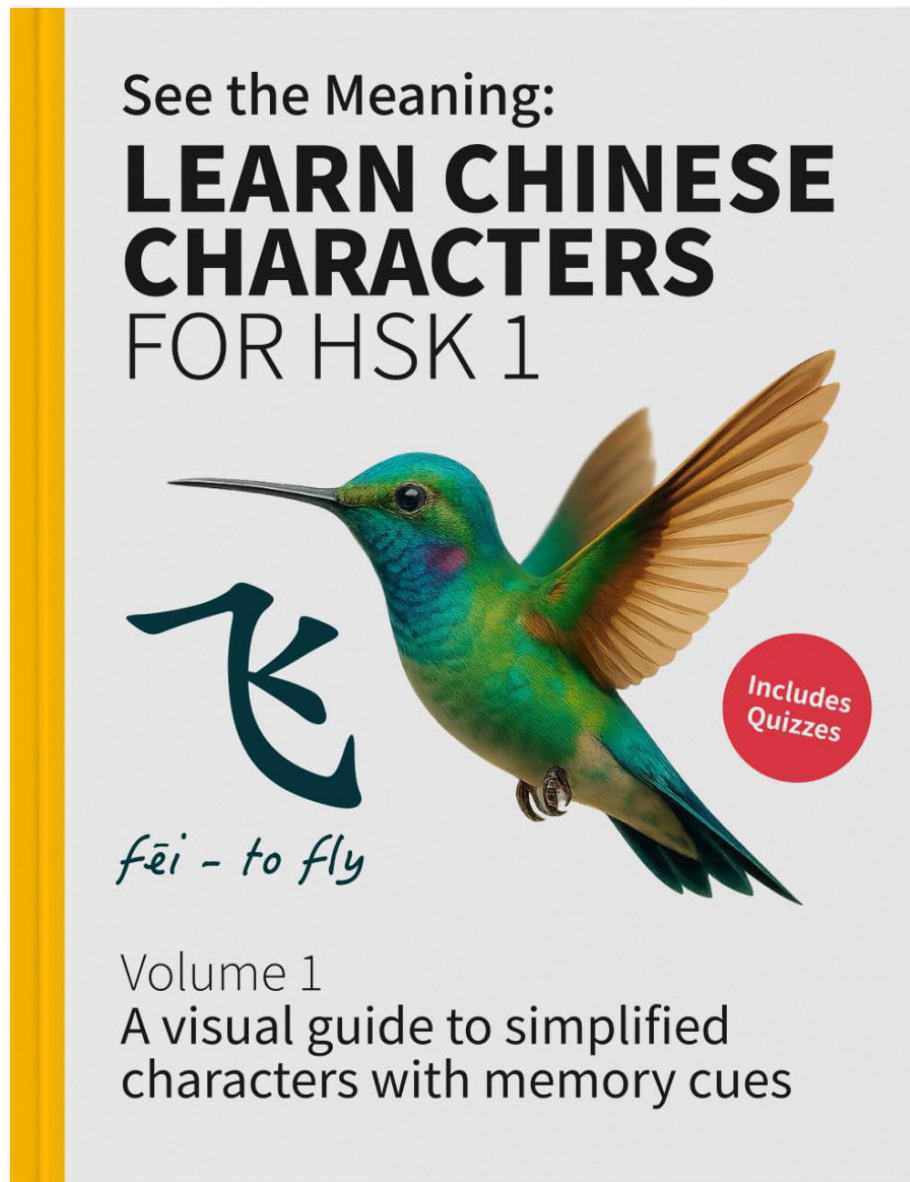
看见 kànjiàn: seeing	看 kān, kàn to look, to see	见 jiàn, xiàn see, observe
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Example: 我没看见。Wǒ méi kàn jiàn. - I didn't see it.

Continue Your Hanzi Journey

If these 15 characters suddenly made more sense, the full workbook will help you go further.

Explore more HSK 1 characters with visual memory hooks, component breakdowns, stroke order diagrams, example words, and writing practice.



Scan the QR code to discover the full book.