CHINESE BOOST

# Idioms and proverbs Chinese vocabulary: Advanced (HSK 7-9)

50 words with pinyin, 繁體 and meanings, 43 of them with an example sentence.
Every word here links to its entry on the site.

Idioms and proverbs Chinese vocabulary: Advanced (HSK 7-9) on the web
The same words as a CSV, for Anki or a spreadsheet
A free account, which keeps 简体 or 繁體, pinyin or 注音 and the rest of how you read Chinese on every device

Chinese Boost. Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence.

## Words

### 入乡随俗 入鄉隨俗
rùxiāngsuísú when in Rome, do as the Romans do

> 住在这里就得入乡随俗啊。
> Zhù zài zhèlǐ jiù de rùxiāngsuísú a.
> If you live here, you have to follow the local customs.

### 俗语 俗語
súyǔ common saying / proverb / colloquial speech

> 这句俗语是什么意思?
> Zhè jù súyǔ shì shénme yìsi?
> What does this saying mean?

### 名言
míngyán saying / famous remark

> 他常把这句名言挂在嘴边。
> Tā cháng bǎ zhè jù míngyán guàzàizuǐbiān.
> He often has this saying on his lips.

### 寓言
yùyán fable / allegory / parable

> 这则寓言告诉孩子要诚实。
> Zhè zé yùyán gàosu háizi yào chéngshí.
> This fable teaches children to be honest.

### 寓意
yùyì moral (of a story) / lesson to be learned / implication / message / import / metaphorical meaning

> 龙在中国文化里寓意吉祥。
> Lóng zài Zhōngguó wénhuà lǐ yùyì jíxiáng.
> In Chinese culture, the dragon symbolizes good fortune.

### 引用
yǐnyòng to quote / to cite / to recommend / to appoint / reference

> 这个引用出自哪里?
> Zhège yǐnyòng chūzì nǎlǐ?
> Where does this quote come from?

### 歇后语 歇後語
xiēhòuyǔ anapodoton (a saying in which the second part, uttered after a pause or totally left out, is the intended meaning of the allegory presented in the first part)

### 惯用语 慣用語
guànyòngyǔ commonly used phrase / idiom / colloquial usage

### 熟语 熟語
shúyǔ idiom

### 土话 土話
tǔhuà vernacular / slang / dialect / patois

### 口头禅 口頭禪
kǒutóuchán Zen saying repeated as cant / catchphrase / mantra / favorite expression / stock phrase

> 这句话成了她的口头禅。
> Zhè jù huà chéng le tā de kǒutóuchán.
> That sentence has become her favorite expression.

### 一举两得 一舉兩得
yījǔliǎngdé one action, two gains (idiom) / two birds with one stone

> 散步买菜，一举两得!
> Sànbù mǎicài, yìjǔliǎngdé!
> Walking and shopping for groceries at once, two birds with one stone!

### 半途而废 半途而廢
bàntú'érfèi to give up halfway (idiom) / leave sth unfinished

> 不要半途而废。
> Búyào bàntú'érfèi.
> Once you have begun to do something, never give up.

### 一心一意
yīxīnyīyì concentrating one's thoughts and efforts / single-minded / bent on / intently

> 她一心一意地工作。
> Tā yìxīn-yíyì de gōngzuò.
> She works with single-minded determination.

### 画蛇添足 畫蛇添足
huàshétiānzú lit. draw legs on a snake (idiom) / fig. to ruin the effect by adding sth superfluous / to overdo it

> 不要画蛇添足。
> Búyào huàshétiānzú.
> Let well alone.

### 守株待兔
shǒuzhūdàitù lit. to guard a tree-stump, waiting for rabbits (idiom) / to wait idly for opportunities / to trust to chance rather than show initiative

> 找工作不能守株待兔。
> Zhǎo gōngzuò bùnéng shǒuzhūdàitù.
> You can't just sit around waiting for a job to come to you.

### 亡羊补牢 亡羊補牢
wángyángbǔláo lit. to mend the pen after sheep are lost (idiom) / fig. to act belatedly / better late than never / to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted

> 亡羊补牢，现在学也不晚。
> Wángyángbǔláo, xiànzài xué yě bù wǎn.
> Better late than never, it's not too late to learn now.

### 刻舟求剑 刻舟求劍
kèzhōuqiújiàn lit. a notch on the side of a boat to locate a sword dropped overboard (idiom) / fig. an action made pointless by changed circumstances

> 旧地图找新路，是刻舟求剑。
> Jiù dìtú zhǎo xīn lù, shì kèzhōuqiújiàn.
> Using an old map to find a new road is futile, like marking the boat to find a lost sword.

### 掩耳盗铃 掩耳盜鈴
yǎn'ěrdàolíng lit. to cover one's ears whilst stealing a bell / to deceive oneself / to bury one's head in the sand (idiom)

> 不看成绩就是掩耳盗铃。
> Bú kàn chéngjì jiùshì yǎn'ěrdàolíng.
> Refusing to look at the grades is just fooling yourself.

## 对牛弹琴 對牛彈琴

duìniútánqín lit. to play the lute to a cow (idiom) / fig. offering a treat to an unappreciative audience / to cast pearls before swine / caviar to the general / to preach to deaf ears / to talk over sb's head

> 对牛弹琴的故事你听过吗?
> Duìniútánqín de gùshi nǐ tīngguo ma?
> Have you heard the story of playing the lute to a cow?

## 井底之蛙

jǐngdǐzhīwā a frog at the bottom of a well (idiom) / a person of limited outlook and experience

> 他就像井底之蛙。
> Tā jiù xiàng jǐngdǐzhīwā.
> He is like a frog in a well.

## 自相矛盾

zìxiāngmáodùn to contradict oneself / self-contradictory / inconsistent

> 证人的说法自相矛盾。
> Zhèngrén de shuōfa zìxiāngmáodùn.
> The witness's statements are inconsistent.

## 画龙点睛 畫龍點睛

huàlóngdiǎnjīng to paint a dragon and dot in the eyes (idiom) / fig. to add the vital finishing touch / the crucial point that brings the subject to life / a few words to clinch the point

> 我将增加画龙点睛的功能。
> Wǒ jiāng zēngjiā huàlóngdiǎnjīng de gōngnéng.
> I'll add the finishing touch.

## 胸有成竹

xiōngyǒuchéngzhú to have a well-thought-out plan in mind

> 她胸有成竹地走上台。
> Tā xiōngyǒuchéngzhú de zǒu shàngtái.
> She walked onto the stage with full confidence in her plan.

## 理所当然 理所當然

lǐsuǒdāngrán as it should be by rights (idiom) / proper and to be expected as a matter of course / inevitable and right

> 她理所当然的取得了胜利。
> Tā lǐsuǒdāngrán de qǔdéle shènglì.
> She's sure to succeed.

## 全力以赴

quánlìyǐfù to make an all-out effort

> 他在全力以赴。
> Tā zài quánlì-yǐfù.
> He's doing his best.

## 迫不及待

pòbùjídài unable to hold oneself back / eager to do sth without delay

> 我迫不及待想见到你!
> Wǒ pòbùjídài xiǎng jiàndào nǐ!
> I can't wait to see you!

## 取长补短 取長補短

qǔchángbǔduǎn lit. use others' strengths to make up for one's weak points (idiom from Mencius) / to use this in place of that / what you lose on the swings, you win on the roundabouts

> 你该向同事取长补短。
> Nǐ gāi xiàng tóngshì qǔchángbǔduǎn.
> You should learn from your colleagues' strengths to improve your weak points.

## 后悔莫及 後悔莫及

hòuhuǐmòjí too late for regrets (idiom) / It is useless to repent after the event.

## 无论如何 無論如何

wúlùnrúhé whatever the case / in any event / no matter what / by all possible means

> 无论如何，谢了!
> Wúlùnrúhé, xièle!
> Thank you all the same.

## 不耻下问 不恥下問

bùchǐxiàwèn not feel ashamed to ask and learn from one's subordinates

> 经理不耻下问，请教新人。
> Jīnglǐ bùchǐxiàwèn, qǐngjiào xīnrén.
> The manager is not too proud to ask the newcomer for advice.

## 光阴似箭 光陰似箭

guāngyīnsìjiàn time flies like an arrow (idiom) / How time flies!

## 一石二鸟 一石二鳥

yīshí'èrniǎo to kill two birds with one stone (idiom)

## 趁热打铁 趁熱打鐵

chènrèdǎtiě to strike while the iron is hot

> 你该趁热打铁，马上去复习。
> Nǐ gāi chènrèdǎtiě, mǎshàng qù fùxí.
> You should strike while the iron is hot and go review right now.

## 实事求是 實事求是

shíshìqiúshì lit. to seek truth from facts (idiom) / fig. to be practical and realistic

> 做研究要实事求是。
> Zuò yánjiū yào shíshìqiúshì.
> Research should seek truth from facts.

## 引人注目

yǐnrénzhùmù to attract attention / eye-catching / conspicuous

> 她的红色礼服使她引人注目。
> Tā de hóngsè lǐfú shǐ tā yǐnrén-zhùmù.
> Her red dress made her stand out.

## 大街小巷

dàjiēxiǎoxiàng great streets and small alleys (idiom) / everywhere in the city

> 大街小巷都挂满了灯笼。
> Dàjiē-xiǎoxiàng dōu guà mǎnle dēnglóng.
> Lanterns were hung all over the streets and alleys.

## 千方百计 千方百計

qiānfāngbǎijì lit. thousand ways, a hundred plans (idiom) / by every possible means

> 他千方百计想买到票。
> Tā qiānfāng-bǎijì xiǎng mǎi dào piào.
> He tried every possible means to get a ticket.

## 措手不及

cuòshǒubùjí no time to deal with it (idiom) / caught unprepared

> 消息来得太快，我措手不及。
> Xiāoxi láide tài kuài, wǒ cuòshǒubùjí.
> The news came so fast that I wasn't ready for it.

## 家喻户晓 家喻戶曉

jiāyùhùxiǎo understood by everyone (idiom) / well known / a household name

> 这首歌在中国家喻户晓。
> Zhè shǒu gē zài Zhōngguó jiāyù-hùxiǎo.
> This song is known to everyone in China.

## 从容不迫 從容不迫

cóngróngbùpò calm / unruffled

> 他从容不迫地走上了讲台。
> Tā cóngróngbúpò de zǒu shàng le jiǎngtái.
> He walked up to the podium calmly.

## 理直气壮 理直氣壯

lǐzhíqìzhuàng in the right and self-confident (idiom) / bold and confident with justice on one's side / to have the courage of one's convictions / just and forceful

> 他理直气壮地说出了自己的想法。
> Tā lǐzhíqìzhuàng de shuōchūle zìjǐ de xiǎngfǎ.
> He confidently stated his views with the courage of his convictions.

## 独一无二 獨一無二

dúyīwú'èr unique / unmatched / unrivalled

> 这真是好得独一无二!
> Zhè zhēnshi hǎo de dúyī-wú'èr!
> This is uniquely good.

## 错综复杂 錯綜複雜

cuòzōngfùzá tangled and complicated (idiom)

> 老城区的小巷错综复杂。
> Lǎochéng Qū de xiǎoxiàng cuòzōng-fùzá.
> The little alleys in the old town are a tangled maze.

## 针锋相对 針鋒相對

zhēnfēngxiāngduì to oppose each other with equal harshness (idiom) / tit for tat / measure for measure

> 兄弟俩一见面就针锋相对。
> Xiōngdì liǎ yí jiànmiàn jiù zhēnfēng-xiāngduì.
> The two brothers go at each other the moment they meet.

## 斩钉截铁 斬釘截鐵

zhǎndīngjiétiě to chop the nail and slice the iron (idiom) / resolute and decisive / unhesitating / categorical

> 我斩钉截铁地拒绝了。
> Wǒ zhǎndīng-jiétiě de jùjuéle.
> I flatly refused.

## 力不从心 力不從心

lìbùcóngxīn to lack the ability to do what one would wish

> 工作太多，他力不从心。
> Gōngzuò tài duō, tā lìbùcóngxīn.
> There's too much work, and he can't keep up.

## 触目惊心 觸目驚心

chùmùjīngxīn lit. shocks the eye, astonishes the heart (idiom) / shocking / horrible to see / a ghastly sight

> 车祸现场的画面触目惊心。
> Chēhuò xiànchǎng de huàmiàn chùmù-jīngxīn.
> The scene of the car accident was horrible to look at.

## 提心吊胆 提心吊膽

tíxīndiàodǎn nervous / fearful / on edge

> 他开车时总是提心吊胆。
> Tā kāichē shí zǒngshì tíxīn-diàodǎn.
> He is always on edge when he drives.

## 千军万马 千軍萬馬

qiānjūnwànmǎ magnificent army with thousands of men and horses (idiom) / impressive display of manpower / all the King's horses and all the King's men

> 胃里如同千军万马开过。
> Wèi lǐ rútóng qiānjūn-wànmǎ kāiguo.
> An army marches on its stomach.