CHINESE BOOST

Idioms and proverbs Chinese vocabulary: Intermediate (HSK 4-6)

25 words with pinyin, 繁體 and meanings, 18 of them with an example sentence.
Every word here links to its entry on the site.

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Words

马马虎虎 馬馬虎虎
mǎmahūhū careless / casual / vague / not so bad / so-so / tolerable / fair

谚语 諺語
yànyǔ proverb

名句
míngjù oft-quoted phrase / famous line

> 这句名句我在书上读过。
> Zhè jù míngjù wǒ zài shū shàng dúguo.
> I've read this famous line in a book.

比喻
bǐyù to compare / to liken to / metaphor / analogy / figure of speech / figuratively

> 老师说，这个比喻很有意思。
> Lǎoshī shuō, zhège bǐyù hěn yǒuyìsi.
> The teacher said this metaphor is very interesting.

形容
xíngróng to describe / countenance / appearance

> 我不知道该怎么形容。
> Wǒ bù zhīdào gāi zěnme xíngróng.
> I can't really describe it.

成语 成語
chéngyǔ Chinese set expression, typically of 4 characters, often alluding to a story or historical quotation / idiom / proverb / saying / adage

> 他说话时爱用成语。
> Tā shuōhuà shí ài yòng chéngyǔ.
> He likes to use idioms when he talks.

方言
fāngyán topolect / dialect / the first Chinese dialect dictionary, edited by Yang Xiong 揚雄|扬雄[Yang2 Xiong2] in 1st century, containing over 9000 characters

> 我对方言很感兴趣。
> Wǒ duì fāngyán hěn gǎnxìngqù.
> I'm very interested in dialects.

典故
diǎngù classical story or quote from the literature / the story behind sth

格言
géyán maxim

出处 出處
chūchù source (esp. of quotation or literary allusion) / origin / where sth comes from
chūchǔ to take office or retire / to advance or withdraw / to take office or retire / to advance or withdraw

> 请你查一查这个词语的出处。
> Qǐng nǐ chá yi chá zhège cíyǔ de chūchù.
> Please look up where this expression comes from.

含义 含義
hányì meaning (implicit in a phrase) / implied meaning / hidden meaning / hint / connotation

> 这个词有两种含义。
> Zhège cí yǒu liǎng zhǒng hányì.
> This word has two meanings.

自言自语 自言自語
zìyánzìyǔ to talk to oneself / to think aloud / to soliloquize

> 老人时常自言自语。
> Lǎorén shícháng zìyán-zìyǔ.
> Old people often talk to themselves.

百闻不如一见 百聞不如一見
bǎiwénbùrúyījiàn seeing once is better than hearing a hundred times (idiom) / seeing for oneself is better than hearing from many others / seeing is believing

> 百闻不如一见，这里真漂亮!
> Bǎiwénbùrúyíjiàn, zhèlǐ zhēn piàoliang!
> Seeing is believing, and this place really is beautiful!

熟能生巧
shúnéngshēngqiǎo with familiarity you learn the trick (idiom) / practice makes perfect

> 熟能生巧，多练几次吧。
> Shúnéngshēngqiǎo, duō liàn jǐcì ba.
> Practice makes perfect, so try a few more times.

三心二意
sānxīn'èryì in two minds about sth (idiom) / half-hearted / shilly-shallying

不见不散 不見不散

bùjiànbùsàn lit. Even if we don't see each other, don't give up and leave (idiom) / fig. Be sure to wait! / See you there!

> 咱们说好了，不见不散。
> Zánmen shuōhǎole, bújiànbúsàn.
> It's settled then, see you there.

万事开头难 萬事開頭難

wànshìkāitóunán every beginning is difficult (idiom) / getting started is always the hardest part

> 万事开头难，慢慢来吧。
> Wànshìkāitóunán, mànmànlái ba.
> Every beginning is hard, so take it slowly.

失败是成功之母 失敗是成功之母

shībàishìchénggōngzhīmǔ Failure is the mother of success.

> 别难过，失败是成功之母。
> Bié nánguò, shībàishìchénggōngzhīmǔ.
> Don't be sad, failure is the mother of success.

一模一样 一模一樣

yīmúyīyàng exactly alike / identical

> 他跟哥哥一模一样。
> Tā gēn gēge yìmúyíyàng.
> He is identical to his older brother.

众所周知 眾所周知

zhòngsuǒzhōuzhī as everyone knows

> 他的名字众所周知。
> Tā de míngzi zhòngsuǒzhōuzhī.
> Everybody knows his name.

一帆风顺 一帆風順

yīfānfēngshùn propitious wind throughout the journey (idiom) / plain sailing / to go smoothly / have a nice trip!

> 人生不会总是一帆风顺的。
> Rénshēng búhuì zǒngshì yìfānfēngshùn de.
> Life is not always plain sailing.

人山人海

rénshānrénhǎi multitude / vast crowd

> 那里人山人海。
> Nàli rénshānrénhǎi.
> There's a huge number of people there.

衣食住行

yīshízhùxíng clothing, food, housing and transportation (idiom) / people's basic needs

> 他赚的钱只够付衣食住行。
> Tā zhuàn de qián zhǐ gòu fù yīshízhùxíng.
> The money he earns only covers his basic needs.

话里有话 話裡有話

huàlǐyǒuhuà one's words carry an implicit meaning

言外之意

yánwàizhīyì unspoken implication / the actual meaning of what was said