CHINESE BOOST

Language and expression Chinese vocabulary list

117 words with pinyin, 繁體 and meanings, 79 of them with an example sentence.
Every word here links to its entry on the site.

Parts 1 2 3 4 5

Language and expression Chinese vocabulary list 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

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Elementary (HSK 1-3)

汉字 漢字

hànzì Chinese character(s)

> 我认识汉字。
> Wǒ rènshi hànzì.
> I know the Chinese characters.

词 詞

cí word / a form of lyric poetry, flourishing in the Song dynasty 宋朝[Song4 chao2] / statement / speech / lyrics

> 你们怎么读这个词?
> Nǐmen zěnme dú zhège cí?
> How do you pronounce this word?

语言 語言

yǔyán language

> 语言好可爱。
> Yǔyán hǎo kě'ài.
> Language is easy to love.

句子

jùzi sentence

> 句子越来越多了。
> Jùzi yuèláiyuè duō le.
> There are more and more sentences.

词典 詞典

cídiǎn dictionary

> 这词典不好。
> Zhè cídiǎn bù hǎo.
> This dictionary is no good.

外语 外語

wàiyǔ foreign language

> 我喜欢外语。
> Wǒ xǐhuan wàiyǔ.
> I like foreign languages.

句号 句號

jùhào full stop / period (punct.)

> 你忘了在后面写句号。
> Nǐ wàngle zài hòumian xiě jùhào.
> You forgot to put a full stop at the end.

问号 問號

wènhào question mark (punct.) / unknown factor / unsolved problem / interrogation

> 请在后面加一个问号。
> Qǐng zài hòumian jiā yí gè wènhào.
> Please add a question mark at the end.

Intermediate (HSK 4-6)

语法 語法

yǔfǎ grammar / syntax

> 语法是很复杂的。
> Yǔfǎ shì hěn fùzá de.
> Grammar is a very complex thing.

翻译 翻譯

fānyì to translate / to interpret / translation / interpretation / translator / interpreter

> 我是个翻译。
> Wǒ shì gè fānyì.
> I'm a translator.

普通话 普通話

pǔtōnghuà Putonghua / standard Mandarin

> 你会讲普通话吗?
> Nǐ huì jiǎng pǔtōnghuà ma?
> Can you speak Mandarin?

口语 口語

kǒuyǔ colloquial speech / spoken language / vernacular language / slander / gossip

> 你想怎么练习英语口语?
> Nǐ xiǎng zěnme liànxí Yīngyǔ kǒuyǔ?
> How do you want to practice spoken English?

词语 詞語

cíyǔ word (general term including monosyllables through to short phrases) / term (e.g. technical term) / expression

> 这个词语是什么意思?
> Zhège cíyǔ shì shénme yìsi?
> What does this word mean?

文字
wénzì character / script / writing / written language / writing style / phraseology

> 这是个文字游戏。
> Zhè shì gè wénzì yóuxì.
> This is a pun.

正式
zhèngshì formal / official

> 他给了我正式批准。
> Tā gěi le wǒ zhèngshì pīzhǔn.
> He gave me his stamp of approval.

随便 隨便
suíbiàn as one wishes / as one pleases / negligent / wanton / at random / casual

> 请随便问问题。
> Qǐng suíbiàn wèn wèntí.
> Please feel free to ask me questions.

礼貌 禮貌
lǐmào courteous / polite / courtesy / politeness / manners

> 你不讲礼貌。
> Nǐ bù jiǎng lǐmào.
> You have no manners.

文章
wénzhāng article / essay / literary works / writings / hidden meaning

> 你看文章了没?
> Nǐ kàn wénzhāng le méi?
> You read the paper?

流利
liúlì fluent

> 他的英语多流利啊!
> Tā de Yīngyǔ duō liúlì a!
> His English is very fluent!

发音 發音
fāyīn pronunciation / to pronounce / to emit sound

> 这个字很难发音。
> Zhège zì hěn nán fāyīn.
> This word is difficult to pronounce.

拼音
pīnyīn phonetic writing / pinyin (Chinese romanization)

> 你会用拼音打字吗?
> Nǐ huì yòng pīnyīn dǎzì ma?
> Can you type using pinyin?

表达 表達
biǎodá to express / to convey

> 你想表达什么?
> Nǐ xiǎng biǎodá shénme?
> What do you mean?

语气 語氣
yǔqì tone / manner of speaking / mood

> 他说话的语气好像是在害怕什么。
> Tā shuōhuà de yǔqì hǎoxiàng shì zài hàipà shénme.
> He speaks as though he were afraid of something.

词汇 詞彙
cíhuì vocabulary / list of words (e.g. for language teaching purposes) / word

> 多读书能增加你的词汇。
> Duō dúshū néng zēngjiā nǐ de cíhuì.
> Reading more can build up your vocabulary.

语音 語音
yǔyīn speech sounds / pronunciation / colloquial (rather than literary) pronunciation of a Chinese character / phonetic / audio / voice / to voice chat / voice message

> 这位老师的语音很标准。
> Zhèwèi lǎoshī de yǔyīn hěn biāozhǔn.
> This teacher's pronunciation is very standard.

语文 語文
yǔwén literature and language / Chinese (as a school subject)

> 语文老师讲课很有意思。
> Yǔwén lǎoshī jiǎngkè hěn yǒuyìsi.
> The Chinese teacher's lessons are very interesting.

书法 書法
shūfǎ calligraphy / handwriting / penmanship

> 你擅长书法吗?
> Nǐ shàncháng shūfǎ ma?
> Are you good at calligraphy?

量词 量詞
liàngcí classifier (in Chinese grammar) / measure word

> 中文的量词很难记。
> Zhōngwén de liàngcí hěn nánjì.
> Chinese classifiers are hard to remember.

写作 寫作
xiězuò writing / written works / to write / to compose

> 他不喜欢写作。
> Tā bù xǐhuan xiězuò.
> He doesn't like writing.

字母
zìmǔ letter (of the alphabet)

> 选择一个字母。
> Xuǎnzé yí gè zìmǔ.
> Pick a letter.

演讲 演講
yǎnjiǎng to give a lecture / to make a speech

> 他的演讲让我很无聊。
> Tā de yǎnjiǎng ràng wǒ hěn wúliáo.
> I was bored with his speech.

草稿
cǎogǎo draft / outline / sketch

读音 讀音
dúyīn pronunciation / literary (rather than colloquial) pronunciation of a Chinese character

> 老师，这个词的读音是什么?
> Lǎoshī, zhège cí de dúyīn shì shénme?
> Teacher, what is the pronunciation of this word?

逗号 逗號
dòuhào comma (punct.)

> 这里应该加一个逗号。
> Zhèlǐ yīnggāi jiā yí gè dòuhào.
> You should add a comma here.

引号 引號
yǐnhào quotation mark (punct.)

> 别忘了给这句话加上引号。
> Bié wàngle gěi zhè jù huà jiāshàng yǐnhào.
> Don't forget to put quotation marks around this sentence.

冒号 冒號
màohào colon (punct.)

> 冒号后面的内容是什么意思?
> Màohào hòumian de nèiróng shì shénme yìsi?
> What does the part after the colon mean?

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.

声调 聲調
shēngdiào tone / note / a tone (on a Chinese syllable)

> 她声调突然变了。
> Tā shēngdiào tūrán biànle.
> There was a sudden change in her tone.

母语 母語
mǔyǔ native language / mother tongue / parent language

> 你的母语是什么?
> Nǐ de mǔyǔ shì shénme?
> What is your mother tongue?

书写 書寫
shūxiě to write

> 请用黑笔书写，不要用铅笔。
> Qǐng yòng hēi bǐ shūxiě, búyào yòng qiānbǐ.
> Please write in black pen, not pencil.

措辞 措辭
cuòcí wording / way of expressing something / turn of phrase / diction

书面 書面
shūmiàn in writing / written

> 你们的约定最好写成书面的。
> Nǐmen de yuēdìng zuìhǎo xiě chéng shūmiàn de.
> It would be best to put your agreement in writing.

口头 口頭
kǒutóu oral / verbal

> 明天的英语考试有口头部分。
> Míngtiān de Yīngyǔ kǎoshì yǒu kǒutóu bùfen.
> Tomorrow's English exam has an oral part.

校对 校對
jiàoduì proofreader / to proofread / to calibrate

同义 同義
tóngyì synonymous

分号 分號
fēnhào semicolon / branch (of a business, shop etc)

反义 反義
fǎnyì antonymous / antisense

破折号 破折號
pòzhéhào dash / Chinese dash —— (punct., double the length of the western dash)

> 你为什么在这里用破折号?
> Nǐ wèishénme zài zhèlǐ yòng pòzhéhào?
> Why did you use a dash here?

Advanced (HSK 7-9)

标点符号 標點符號
biāodiǎnfúhào punctuation / a punctuation mark

> 他写字时总忘了标点符号。
> Tā xiězì shí zǒng wàngle biāodiǎnfúhào.
> He always forgets punctuation when he writes.

感叹号 感嘆號
gǎntànhào exclamation point / exclamation mark (!)

> 请在句子后面加感叹号。
> Qǐng zài jùzi hòumian jiā gǎntànhào.
> Please add an exclamation mark after the sentence.

省略号 省略號
shěnglüèhào ellipsis

> 这三个小点是省略号。
> Zhè sān gè xiǎodiǎn shì shěnglüèhào.
> These three little dots are an ellipsis.

标点 標點
biāodiǎn punctuation / a punctuation mark / to punctuate

> 句末要用什么标点?
> Jù mò yào yòng shénme biāodiǎn?
> What punctuation mark should go at the end of the sentence?

语言学 語言學
yǔyánxué linguistics

> 我姐姐在大学学语言学。
> Wǒ jiějie zài dàxué xué yǔyánxué.
> My older sister studies linguistics at university.

书面语 書面語
shūmiànyǔ written language

笔画 筆畫
bǐhuà strokes of a Chinese character

> 他喜欢用画笔画山川。
> Tā xǐhuan yòng huà bǐhuà shānchuān.
> He likes to paint mountains and rivers with a brush.

偏旁
piānpáng component of a Chinese character (as the radical or the phonetic part)

> 我常把这两个字的偏旁写错。
> Wǒ cháng bǎ zhè liǎng gè zì de piānpáng xiě cuò.
> I often write the components of these two characters wrong.

部首
bùshǒu radical of a Chinese character

> 查字典时，可以先找部首。
> Chá zìdiǎn shí, kěyǐ xiān zhǎo bùshǒu.
> When using a dictionary, you can look up the radical first.

繁体字 繁體字
fántǐzì traditional Chinese character

> 这是繁体字。
> Zhè shì fántǐzì.
> This is in Traditional Chinese characters.

简体字 簡體字
jiǎntǐzì simplified Chinese character, as opposed to traditional Chinese character 繁體字|繁体字[fan2 ti3 zi4]

> 这是简体字。
> Zhè shì jiǎntǐzì.
> This is simplified Chinese.

同义词 同義詞
tóngyìcí synonym

反义词 反義詞
fǎnyìcí antonym

修辞 修辭
xiūcí rhetoric

> 比喻是最常见的一种修辞。
> Bǐyù shì zuì chángjiàn de yìzhǒng xiūcí.
> Metaphor is the most common kind of figure of speech.

用词 用詞
yòngcí usage (of a term) / wording / phrasing

> 用词得当，文章才好懂。
> Yòngcí dédàng, wénzhāng cái hǎo dǒng.
> Only when the wording is suitable is an essay easy to understand.

口音
kǒuyin accent / voice
kǒuyīn oral speech sounds

> 我有什么口音？
> Wǒ yǒu shénme kǒuyin?
> What accent have I got?

文言文
wényánwén Classical Chinese writing

白话 白話
báihuà spoken language / vernacular

词性 詞性
cíxìng part of speech (noun, verb, adjective etc) / lexical category

> 词性不同，意思也不同。
> Cíxìng bùtóng, yìsi yě bùtóng.
> When the lexical category differs, the meaning differs too.

语序 語序
yǔxù word order

俚语 俚語
lǐyǔ slang

行话 行話
hánghuà jargon / language of the trade

术语 術語
shùyǔ term / terminology

委婉
wěiwǎn tactful / euphemistic / suave / soft

> 她拒绝得很委婉。
> Tā jùjué de hěn wěiwǎn.
> She turned it down very tactfully.

文雅
wényǎ elegant / refined

> 她说话的样子很文雅。
> Tā shuōhuà de yàngzi hěn wényǎ.
> She speaks in a very elegant way.

庄重 莊重
zhuāngzhòng grave / solemn / dignified

> 他庄重地接过了奖杯。
> Tā zhuāngzhòng de jiēguò le jiǎngbēi.
> He accepted the trophy with dignity.

措词 措詞
cuòcí wording / way of expressing something / turn of phrase / diction

多音字
duōyīnzì character with two or more readings

象形文字
xiàngxíngwénzì pictogram / hieroglyph

形声字 形聲字
xíngshēngzì phono-semantic compound character

同音字
tóngyīnzì Chinese character that is pronounced the same (as another character)

谐音 諧音
xiéyīn homonym / homophone / harmonic (component of sound)

语调 語調
yǔdiào intonation / tone of voice

简称 簡稱
jiǎnchēng to be abbreviated to / abbreviation / short form

> 北京大学简称北大。
> Běijīng Dàxué jiǎnchēng běidà.
> Peking University is abbreviated as Beida.

译 譯
yì to translate / to interpret

> 这本书是谁译的？
> Zhè běn shū shì shéi yì de?
> Who translated this book?

标语 標語
biāoyǔ written slogan / placard
> 游行的人手里都举着标语。
> Yóuxíng de rén shǒulǐ dōu jǔzhe biāoyǔ.
> The people in the march were all holding placards.

口气 口氣
kǒuqì tone of voice / the way one speaks / manner of expression / tone
> 她对着冰凉的手呵了口气。
> Tā duì zhe bīngliáng de shǒu ā le kǒuqì.
> She breathed on her icy hands.

撰写 撰寫
zhuànxiě to write / to compose
> 她撰写了一封感谢信。
> Tā zhuànxiěle yìfēng gǎnxièxìn.
> She composed a thank-you letter.

字体 字體
zìtǐ calligraphic style / typeface / font
> 爷爷的字体很有力量。
> Yéye de zìtǐ hěn yǒu lìliang.
> My grandfather's calligraphic style is very powerful.

摘要
zhāiyào summary / abstract
> 先读一下报告的摘要吧。
> Xiān dú yíxià bàogào de zhāiyào ba.
> Let's read the summary of the report first.

演说 演說
yǎnshuō speech / to deliver a speech
> 好一场演说!
> Hǎo yìcháng yǎnshuō!
> What a speech!

字迹 字跡
zìjì handwriting
> 我的字迹难以辨别。
> Wǒ de zìjì nányǐ biànbié.
> My handwriting is illegible.

体裁 體裁
tǐcái genre / style / form of writing
> 你最喜欢哪一种文学体裁?
> Nǐ zuì xǐhuan nǎ yìzhǒng wénxué tǐcái?
> Which literary genre do you like best?

插图 插圖
chātú illustration
> 这本书有很多插图。
> Zhè běn shū yǒu hěn duō chātú.
> This book has a lot of illustrations.

提纲 提綱
tígāng outline / synopsis / notes
> 写文章前，先列一个提纲。
> Xiě wénzhāng qián, xiān liè yí gè tígāng.
> Before writing an essay, make an outline first.

滔滔不绝 滔滔不絕
tāotāobùjué to produce a torrent of words / to talk on and on
> 舅舅一喝酒就滔滔不绝。
> Jiùjiu yì hējiǔ jiù tāotāo-bùjué.
> My uncle talks nonstop whenever he drinks.

语义 語義
yǔyì meaning of words / semantic

文风 文風
wénfēng writing style / (used with 鼎盛[ding3 sheng4]) cultural activity
> 你喜欢哪种文风的小说?
> Nǐ xǐhuan nǎ zhǒng wénfēng de xiǎoshuō?
> What style of writing do you like in novels?

语境 語境
yǔjìng context

括号 括號
kuòhào parentheses / brackets
> 你忘了关上后面的括号。
> Nǐ wàngle guānshàng hòumian de kuòhào.
> You forgot to close the parenthesis at the end.

Advanced (HSK 7-9), part 2

引述
yǐnshù to quote

转述 轉述
zhuǎnshù to pass on (stories) / to relate

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.

谜语 謎語
míyǔ riddle / conundrum
> 爸爸给孩子们出了一个谜语。
> Bàba gěi háizimen chūle yí gè míyǔ.
> Dad gave the children a riddle.

押韵 押韻
yāyùn to rhyme / sometimes written 壓韻|压韵

语感 語感
yǔgǎn instinctive feel for the language

错别字 錯別字
cuòbiézì Chinese character error (collective term for 錯字|错字[cuo4 zi4] and 別字|别字[bie2 zi4])
> 我总是写错别字。
> Wǒ zǒngshì xiě cuòbiézì.
> I always make typos.

润色 潤色
rùnsè to polish (a piece of writing) / to add a few finishing touches to (a piece of writing, painting etc)

歧义 歧義
qíyì ambiguity / several possible meanings

Outside HSK

粗俗
cūsú vulgar

> 在孩子面前，别用粗俗的词。
> Zài háizi miànqián, bié yòng cūsú de cí.
> Don't use vulgar words in front of the children.

敬语 敬語
jìngyǔ honorific (e.g. in grammar of oriental languages)

谦辞 謙辭
qiāncí humble words / self-deprecatory expression / to modestly decline

粗话 粗話
cūhuà vulgar language / coarse language

脏话 髒話
zānghuà profanity / obscene language / speaking rudely

大白话 大白話
dàbáihuà colloquial speech

官话 官話
guānhuà "officialese" / bureaucratic language / Mandarin

客套话 客套話
kètàohuà conventional greeting / polite formula

双关 雙關
shuāngguān pun / play on words

> 这是个双关，你听懂了吗？
> Zhè shì gè shuāngguān, nǐ tīngdǒngle ma?
> That's a pun. Did you get it?

语病 語病
yǔbìng faulty wording / mispronunciation due to a speech defect