

Introduction to The Centre for Language and Culture

The Centre for Language and Culture, which is part of The School for Chinese as a Second Language, offers non-degree Chinese language courses for overseas students.

Course Levels:

Our centre provides ten levels of Chinese language courses. There are four elementary levels (Chuji 1, 2, 3, 4), four intermediate levels (Zhongji 1, 2, 3, 4) and two advanced levels (Gaoji 1, 2). Each course is for one semester (17 weeks) in duration, and students will generally not move classes during that semester. Students are allocated to levels mainly according to the results of their placement exam.

Please remember that all of these courses are designed as full-time courses, and require both in-class and outside-class study. In addition to the 20 periods (45 minutes per period) of classes per week, it is expected that students will need to independently study outside of class on average about ten hours every week. Students who fail to study outside of class will almost certainly fall behind in class.

- Chuji 1 is for absolute beginners.
- Chuji 2 is for those who know Pinyin and a little bit of basic Chinese. (Studied previously for less than 100 hours.*)
- Chiji 3 is for those who know five to six hundred words. (Studied previously for about 200 – 300 hours.*)
- Chuji 4 is for those who know six to seven hundred words. (Studied previously for about 250 – 350 hours.*)

- Zhongji 1 and 2 are for those who know more than 1000 words. (Studied previously for about 400 – 600 hours.*)
- Zhongji 3 and 4 are for those who know more than 2000 words. (Studied previously for about 600 – 800 hours.*)

- Gaoji 1 and 2 are for those who know more than 3000 words. (Studied previously for more than 1000 hours.*)

* In general, those who have previously studied Chinese in China will require fewer hours of study to attain a particular level; those who have only studied outside of China will require more hours.

For those who study for more than one semester at our centre, it is typical to move up two levels at the beginning of the next semester. For example, if a student is in Chuji 1 for the first semester, then he or she will be in Chuji 3 for the second semester (assuming he or she passes the course). Those who fail the course, or feel that they are struggling to keep up, will move up just one level (for example, from Chuji 1 to

Chuji 2).

Parallel Courses for Non-East/Southeast Asian:

Chinese language has overlaps with several other East Asian and Southeast Asian languages (for example character overlap with Japanese and vocabulary overlap with Vietnamese). This means that the learning needs of more regionally local students differs from the learning needs of students from outside the region. In our experience, placing such linguistically diverse students in the same elementary class is problematic. For example, an elementary class with many Vietnamese or Japanese students will typically progress at a faster rate. Non-East/Southeast Asian students in such classes often quickly fall behind.

For this reason, we offer parallel courses at elementary levels. In addition to our “normal” courses, there are also courses offered to non-East/Southeast Asian students at Chuji levels 1 and 3.

Classes Provided:

Each course consists of a number of compulsory classes, which will typically be taught by different teachers. These compulsory classes are:

Normal Chuji 1-4:

Reading and Writing (12 periods per week)

- Pinyin (for Chuji 1 only)
- Vocabulary and grammar
- Character reading and writing

Speaking (four periods per week)

- Topic-centred conversations
- Focus on functional everyday expressions

Listening (four periods per week)

- Focusing on listening comprehension
- Improve listening skills

Non-East/Southeast Asian Chuji 1 & 3:

General Chinese (14 periods per week for Chuji 1; 12 periods per week for Chuji 3)

- Vocabulary and grammar
- Listening and speaking activities
- Reading and writing in Pinyin
- Reading and writing in characters (for Chuji 3 only)

Chinese Characters (six periods per week)

- Characters introduced systematically
- Character reading and writing

Reading and Speaking (two periods per week, for Chuji 3 only)

- Story-reading with both characters and Pinyin
- Story-centred speaking activities

Zhongji 1-4 and Gaoji 1-2:

Intensive Reading (four to six periods per week)

- Vocabulary and grammar
- Focus on written Chinese

Extensive Reading (four periods per week)

- Vocabulary building through reading
- Improve reading skills

Speaking (four periods per week)

- Focus on authentic oral expressions
- Focus on expressing ideas

Listening (four periods per week)

- Focus on listening comprehension
- Improve listening skills

Audio Listening (four periods per week, for Zhongji 4 and above only)

- Encounter with authentic audio materials

Writing (two periods per week)

- Designed around different writing genres
- Improve writing skills

Optional classes:

We provide about ten different optional classes each semester. These classes include Characters, Elementary Reading, Elementary Writing, Cantonese, HSK Tutorial, News Reading, Chinese History, Chinese Songs, Taiji and Calligraphy.

These classes are free to all full-time students enrolled in our School, to a maximum of four periods per week. Classes start in the second week.

Course Evaluation:

There are two examinations every semester, namely mid-term and final.

The mid-term test will be held during the ninth week, in normal class times. Normal classes will continue to be held this week, at times when there are no tests.

The final test will be held during the 17th week. This week will be an examination week only, with no classes. The test timetable will be published one month before the start of these tests.

The overall course mark consists of three parts:

- 15% in-class tests and assignments
- 25% mid-term test
- 60% final test

A student will typically need to get at least 60% to pass the course (and move up two

levels the following semester).

Extracurricular Activities:

School Outings

We organise regular half-day outings every two to three weeks. Our destinations include well-known historic and scenic city sites, as well as some more hidden locations based on our local knowledge.

Chinese Salon

This is an indoor cultural event organised by the graduate students of our school. It is held one Friday night every month.

School Trip

We organise a two to three day excursion during the May holiday.

Arts and Culture Performance

We organise a performance evening, for students to display their singing, dancing and language abilities.

You will be informed of these activities several days prior to the event via posters on the noticeboard inside your classroom. In addition, you are welcome to ask your teachers or your class representative for information and assistance.