

# LEARNING MANDARIN:

# A QUICK-START GUIDE

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## ABOUT ME





✧ **My name is Azren the Language Nerd.** I love learning languages! I speak English, Mandarin, French, Spanish, and Gujarati. I regularly share advice for language learners on most major social media platforms, YouTube, and my podcast *The Language Learning Show*. Find me online @polyglotazren.

In terms of my work, I run the Calgary Language Nerds. My team and I teach a variety of languages online as well as locally in Calgary, Canada. We offer a guided self-study program, private/semi-private lessons, and free weekly group classes.

✧ **Learn more at <https://azrenthelanguagenerd.com>**

# 02

## REASONS TO LEARN MANDARIN





## WORK/BUSINESS

China plays a major role in the world's economy. Speaking Mandarin can open up exciting professional opportunities.



## OVER 1 BILLION SPEAKERS

That's more than 10% of the global population! Learning Mandarin allows you to connect with these individuals on a deeper level.



## HISTORY & CULTURE

Chinese history is fascinating. Knowing Mandarin allows you explore it in a more thorough manner.



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

It's important to exercise the brain. What better way to do so than challenging yourself to learn another language?



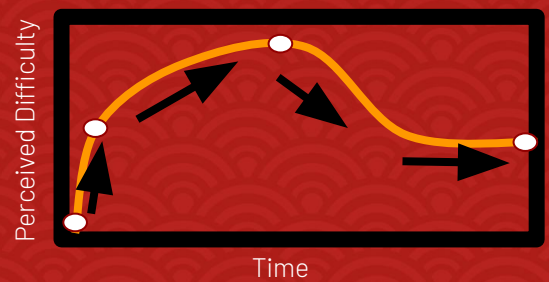
## EASIER THAN YOU THINK

Many believe that Mandarin is the hardest language in the world. This is not true! Learning Mandarin is challenging, but not impossible.



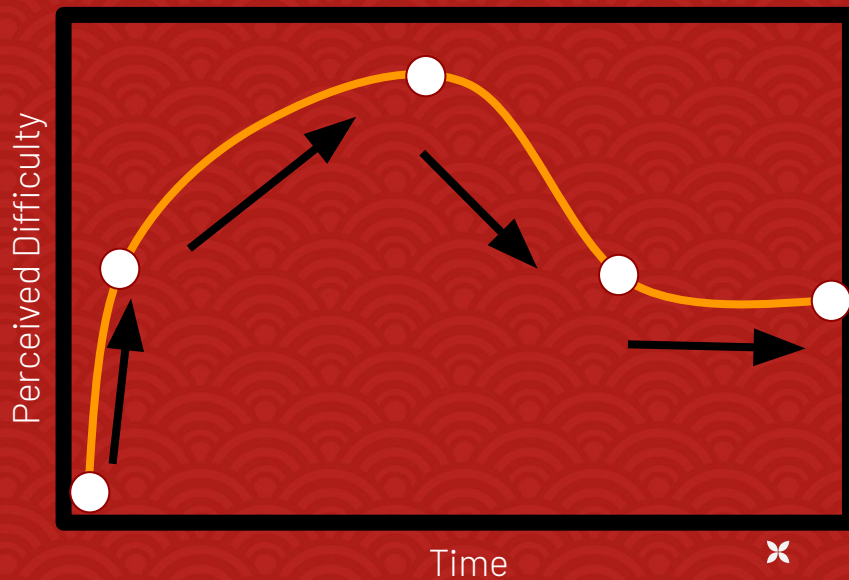


# PERCEIVED DIFFICULTY



# IT'S **VERY HARD** AT FIRST... BUT GETS **EASIER** OVER TIME

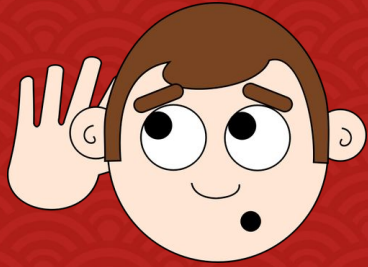
Unlike languages such as Spanish, which start off reasonably easy and get more difficult over time, **Mandarin starts off very hard and gets easier.** As a result, it's easy to get discouraged in the initial learning phases. If this happens, don't quit! Remember that the difficulty level does taper off.





# TRACKING PROGRESS WITH THE HSK TEST





✖

*Listening*

+



*Reading*

+



✖

*Writing*

**The Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) is a standardized test for Mandarin learners composed of a listening, reading, and writing component for each level.**

There is no written part for HSK level 1 and 2. As of 2021, it has been announced that the test will be shifting from a 6-level system to a 9-level system.

✖

✖

# HSK LEVELS

HSK LEVEL	DIFFICULTY	NUMBER OF WORDS
HSK 1	Beginner	500
HSK 2	Beginner	1272
HSK 3	Elementary	2245
HSK 4	Intermediate	3245
HSK 5	Intermediate	4316
HSK 6	Upper-intermediate	5656
HSK 7	Advanced	Not yet announced
HSK 8	Advanced	Not yet announced
HSK 9	Upper-advanced	Not yet announced

# ORAL TEST: THE HSKK

The HSK test does not have a conversation component. Therefore, if you'd like to have an official certificate demonstrating your speaking level, there is another test called the HSKK. It is not nearly as well-known as the HSK and it can be harder to find resources to prepare for this test. However, you can still use it to formally measure your spoken fluency in Mandarin.

HSKK LEVEL	DIFFICULTY	NUMBER OF WORDS
HSKK 1	Beginner	200
HSKK 2	Intermediate	900
HSKK 3	Advanced	3000



# LEARNING METHODS



# TWO TYPES OF OF LEARNING METHODS



## SELF-TEACHING RESOURCES

There are countless apps, pre-recorded courses, and other resources that are a simple Google search away. There is no shortage of self-teaching resources for Mandarin. Many of them are free or at least quite affordable.



## PRIVATE OR GROUP CLASSES

With Mandarin being such a widely-spoken language, you can easily find private tutors and group classes online. There may even be in-person classes offered in your city. Google it and see what you find!

# MY FAVOURITE SELF-STUDY RESOURCES



✦  
YoYo Chinese  
(video course + YouTube channel)



Chinese Pod  
(video course + YouTube channel)



Mandarin Corner  
(video course, YouTube channel,  
and other resources)



Immersive Chinese  
(app + YouTube channel)



Hello Chinese  
(app)



Easy Mandarin  
(YouTube channel)

HOLA

नमस्ते

SALUT

こんにちは

HALLO

你好

Привет

HELLO

# The Calgary LANGUAGE NERDS!

- ✧ My business, the Calgary Language Nerds, also offers a **guided self-study program**, which is perfect for self-motivated individuals. We provide you with resources to “teach yourself” another language. You would also have 2 lessons per month with a friendly & experienced tutor for conversation practice, to keep you accountable, and answer your questions.

- ✧ **Message me @polyglotazren or visit <https://azrenthelanguagenerd.com/classes> to learn more.**



Lastly, you can find other self-study video courses by searching on **Udemy and YouTube.**

## WHERE TO FIND A TUTOR OR PRACTICE PARTNER



At the Calgary Language Nerds, we have Mandarin tutors who are experienced, flexible, and easy to work with. You can also find a tutor or speaking partner on any of the websites/apps below :)



Italki.com  
(website)



Google "Mandarin tutor online," or  
"Mandarin tutor in \_\_\_\_ (your city)"



HelloTalk  
(app)




Some people like to go abroad and take lessons while traveling in a Mandarin-speaking country. Here are two companies that I have used in the past for intensive lessons in Beijing and Taipei. I had a positive experience with both organizations :)






# CONCLUSION









In the end, how you choose to learn Mandarin is up to you. All I ask is that you avoid overthinking the process. Select a program or two and just start!



Based on my experience, I'd recommend choosing **1-2 self-study resources supplemented with private/semi-private tutoring.**



# GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR STUDIES!

While learning Mandarin is not easy, **it is possible**. Plenty of people have achieved their fluency goals in the language, so you can too. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions!



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