Chinese Grammar Step by Step is a useful, easy to understand reference guide to the Chinese language. Based on the Grammar Syllabus in the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education, issued by The Office of Chinese Language Council International, it organises grammar topics in a progressive manner and offers a clear, concise explanation for each language point. Refreshingly presented in a manner that makes learning easy, it is the first guide to Chinese grammar for learners at all levels.

Key features include:
• key structures with sample sentences clearly presented;
• useful examples with grammatical features marked out in colour to aid understanding;
• Chinese text accompanied by pinyin and English translations;
• engaging exercises with full answer key;
• supplementary tips as extended language points to draw connections with other usages;
• comparison with the English language where relevant; and
• a glossary of grammatical terms to enhance understanding.

A well written and beautifully designed book. The grammar point coverage is adequate with clear explanations and useful exercises.

Ruilan Yuan, Oxley College, Victoria, Australia

I especially like the way the book categorises the grammar points... Students will know what grammar points they should master before they advance to the next level.

Hsiu-jen Elsie Chang, Cinci Ranch High School, Texas, USA

The grammatical points in this book are presented in a much simpler way that students in secondary schools and universities could understand and learn...

Jixing Xu, Chinese Language Teachers' Association of Victoria, Australia
CONTENTS 目录

Acknowledgements ......................... VI

Message from the Authors .... VII

Foreword (1) .............................. IX

Foreword (2) ............................ XI

1 Sentences with verbal predicates
   1.1 Shì sentences “是” 字句 ................... 3
   1.2 Yǒu sentences “有” 字句 ................. 4

2 General questions with ma, ba and ne
   2.1 Questions with ma
       用 “吗” 的疑问句 .......................... 6
   2.2 Questions with ba
       用 “吧” 的疑问句 .......................... 7
   2.3 Questions with ne
       用 “呢” 的疑问句 .......................... 8

3 Sentences with adjectival predicates
   3.1 Sentences with adjectival predicates
       形容词谓语句 .................................. 10

4 Sentences with nominal predicates
   4.1 Sentences with nominal predicates
       名词谓语句 .................................. 13

5 Negative sentences with bù
   5.1 Negative sentences with bù
       用 “不” 的否定句 ............................ 15

6 Imperative sentences: For polite request
   6.1 Imperative sentences: For polite request
       祈使句: 表示请求、命令等 ............... 16

7 Exclamatory sentences
   7.1 Exclamatory sentences
       感叹句 ........................................ 18

8 Personal pronouns
   8.1 Personal pronouns
       人称代词 ..................................... 20
   8.2 Demonstrative pronouns
       指示代词 ..................................... 22

9 Adverbs of degree as adverbials
   9.1 Adverbs of degree as adverbials
       程度副词作状语 .............................. 24

10 Numerals

11 Common measure words (I)
   11.1 Common measure words (I)
       常用量词 (一) ................................. 29

12 The conjunction hé 连词 “和” .............. 32

Stage 2 二级语法 35

1 Time expressions
   1.1 Expressing the year, month and day
       表示年、月、日的表达 ..................... 36
   1.2 Expressing days of the week
       星期的表达 .................................. 38
   1.3 Expressing a certain point or period of time
       时点与时段的表达 ......................... 40

2 Expressing price in RMB
   2.1 Expressing price in RMB
       人民币钱数的表达 ......................... 44

3 Sentences with nominal predicates
   3.1 Sentences with nominal predicates
       名词谓语句 .................................. 46

4 Time expressions as adverbials
   4.1 Time expressions as adverbials
       时间状语 ..................................... 47

5 Locations as adverbials
   5.1 Locations as adverbials
       地点状语 ..................................... 50

6 The possessive de 所属关系的表达 ......... 52

7 Directional words
   7.1 Simple directional words
       简单方位词 .................................. 54
   7.2 Compound directional words
       合成方位词 .................................. 55
   7.3 Postpositional phrases
       方位词组 ..................................... 55

8 Questions with interrogative pronouns
   8.1 Questions with interrogative pronouns
       用疑问代词的特殊疑问句 .................. 58
9. Existential sentences 存在的表达
9.1 Zài sentences “在” 字句 .......................... 60
9.2 Yǒu sentences “有” 字句 .......................... 60
9.3 Shi sentences “是” 字句 .......................... 61

10. Expressing distance 距离的表达 ................. 63

11. Expressing wish or desire with yào and xiāng 意愿的表达: “要”、“想” .......... 65

12. The de pronominals “的” 字结构 .................. 67

13. Expressing a brief duration 表达短暂时段 ........ 69
13.1 Duplication of verbs 动词重叠 .................. 69
13.2 Yīxià 一下儿 ........................................... 71

14. Common measure words (II) 常用量词 (二) ........ 73

15. Adverbs of scope 范围副作状语
15.1 Dōu 都 ................................................. 76
15.2 Yě 也 ................................................... 77

Stage 3 三级语法 79

1. Prepositions: Introducing place or direction
介词: 引进空间方位作状语
1.1 Cóng 从 ................................................. 80
1.2 Xiàng 向 ................................................ 81
1.3 Wǎng 往 ................................................ 82
1.4 Cóng…dào…从…到 .................................. 83

2. Expressing action in progress
事件正在进行的表达 .................................. 84

3. The particle zhe 助词 “着” 的用法 ................. 86

4. Existential sentences 存现句 ........................... 88

5. The particle le 助词 “了” 的用法 .................. 90

6. Negative sentences with méi/yǒu 用“没”(有)”的否定句 .............. 93

7. Expressing similarity and dissimilarity
类同的表达 ................................................. 96

8. Comparative structures (I) 比较句 (一)
8.1 Structures with bǐ “比” 字句 ....................... 99

Stage 4 四级语法 127

1. Adverbs of time as adverbial 时间副词作状语
1.1 Hái 还 ................................................... 128
1.2 Yǐjīng 已经 ............................................. 128
1.3 Zài and yǒu “再”和“又” ......................... 129
1.4 Cái and jiù “才”和“就” ....................... 131

2. The particle le 助词 “了” 的用法 ................. 136

3. The particle guò 助词“过”的用法 ................. 139

4. Complements of time 时量补语 ....................... 142

5. Complements of action 动量补语 ..................... 145
5.2 Biàn 遍 .................................................. 146
5.3 Tōng 通 .................................................. 146
5.4 Huì 回 .................................................. 146
5.5 Dùn 顿 .................................................. 147
6 Comparatives structures (II) 比较句 (二) ........................................... 149
7 Pivotal sentences 兼语句 ........................................... 151
8 The shì...de construction 特殊句式: “是...的” ....................................... 152
9 Compound sentences (I): Conjunctions and conjunctives 复句与连词 (一)
  9.1 Order and succession: xiàn...zài... 表示先后次序: 先...再... ........................................... 155
  9.2 Cause and effect: yǐnwèi...suǒyǐ... 表示因果关系: 因为...所以........................................... 156
  9.3 Supposition: nàguò...yídǎoshì...jiù... 表示假设: 如果(要是)...就... ........................................... 157
  9.4 Addition: ǒu...érqié... 表示添加: 不但...而且... ........................................... 157
  9.5 Contrast: suírán...dànshì... 表示对比: 虽然...但是... ........................................... 158

Stage 5 五级语法 163

1 Complements of result 结果补语
  1.1 Adjectives as resultative complements 形容词作结果补语 ........................................... 164
  1.2 Verbs as resultative complements 动词作结果补语 ........................................... 165
  1.3 Negating complements of result 结果补语的否定 ........................................... 166

2 Complements of possibility 结果补语的可能式
  2.1 Positive form 肯定的可能式 .................................................. 168
  2.2 Negative form 否定的可能式 .................................................. 168

3 Common complements of possibility 常用的可能补语 .................................................. 170

4 Complements of direction 趋向补语
  4.1 Simple complements of direction 简单趋向补语 .................................................. 172

4.2 Compound complements of direction 复合趋向补语 .................................................. 172
4.3 Extended uses of complements of direction 趋向补语的引申用法 .................................................. 174
4.4 Creating potential complements 趋向补语的可能式 .................................................. 175

5 Complements of degree 程度补语
  5.1 Without a recipient object 无动词受事 .................................................. 179
  5.2 With a recipient object 带动词受事 .................................................. 180

6 The bò construction “把”字句 .................................................. 183

7 The passive voice 被动句的表达
  7.1 Notional passive 意义上的被动句 .................................................. 188
  7.2 The bì construction “被”字句 .................................................. 188
  7.3 The shì...de construction “是...的”句式 .................................................. 190

8 Compound sentences (II): Conjunctions and conjunctives 复句与连词 (二)
  8.1 Inference: Jí...jiù... 表示推论: 既然...就... .................................................. 192
  8.2 Concession: Jíshī...yě... 表示让步: 即使...也... .................................................. 193
  8.3 “Non-condition”: Wúlùn...dōu... 表示“无条件”：无论...都... .................................................. 194
  8.4 Choice: Būshí...jiùshì... 表示选择: 不是...就是... .................................................. 195
  8.5 Preference: Nìngkě...yě... 表示喜好: 宁可...也... .................................................. 196

Appendices 205

Answer Key 参考答案 .................................................. 206
Table of Key Structures 句型表 .................................................. 224
Glossary of Grammatical Terms 语法术语表 .................................................. 232
Index 索引 .................................................. 235
References 参考文献 .................................................. 239

© Cengage Learning Asia Pte Ltd
## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to **John Cleghorn**, Minister of Uniting Church, Australia, and to **Michael Shaw**, Chinese Department, Melbourne Grammar School, Australia, for their role as the *English reviewers* of this book. Their commitment, hard work and tremendous support have contributed much to the success of this work.

We would also like to thank the following reviewers who offered many helpful insights, ideas and much constructive feedback during the editorial process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hsiu-jen Elsie Chang</strong></td>
<td>Cinco Ranch High School, Texas, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Xin Chen</strong></td>
<td>Berkeley High School, California, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marion Chiu</strong></td>
<td>Wellington East Girls' College, New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kenneth Dee</strong></td>
<td>San Marino High School, California, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elizabeth Downing</strong></td>
<td>Whitehouse Preparatory School, North Carolina Virtual Public School, New Jersey, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erica Pollard</strong></td>
<td>Hingham High School, Massachusetts, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mariam Fan</strong></td>
<td>Saratoga High School, California, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wei Ha</strong></td>
<td>President Chinese Language Teachers’ Federation of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evelyn Man</strong></td>
<td>Confucius Institute Officer, Business Services Curriculum &amp; Learning Innovation Centre, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faraday Pang</strong></td>
<td>Assistant Head of Languages Faculty Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shaohua Que</strong></td>
<td>The Chinese Language Teachers Network Coordinator ACT Department of Education and Training, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qiao Xiao</strong></td>
<td>Chinese Learning Area Leader Caulfield Grammar School, Caulfield Campus, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jixing Xu</strong></td>
<td>President Chinese Language Teachers’ Association of Victoria, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruilan Yuan</strong></td>
<td>Head of LOTE Oxley College, Victoria, Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In recent times, the usual approach to language teaching and learning in the Western world has emphasised fun, hands-on activities and the development of communicative skills. These methods encourage students to enjoy the language, but they are only useful in the primary stage of learning Chinese. Once the students are required to compose written materials or present oral reports, they need to master the grammatical rules of the language. Hence, it is the authors’ intention to write a book which will target the most important Chinese grammatical points, giving full explanation and providing various drills for students to have a good grasp of the language.

This book is written for Chinese language students with an English background. Its structure is largely based on the grammar items listed in the *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education* (《国际汉语教学通用课程大纲》) published by The Office of Chinese Language Council International, China (Hanban, 国家汉办). The authors’ main aim is to provide a simple, clear and concise explanation for each grammatical point under discussion.

While this book is largely based on the grammar items listed in the Curriculum by Hanban, slight modifications have been made to provide greater clarity and ease of reference for the learner. These modifications take the following forms:

- **Integration** — Some contents have been re-organised into relevant sections (e.g. the original Chapter 9, Stage 4, Questions with *zenmele* (怎么了) has been integrated with Chapter 14, Stage 3, Questions with *zenme* (怎么), to bring the related points together).

- **Refinement** — Some chapters are broken up into smaller sections where more sub-points are listed (e.g. Chapter 2, Stage 1 is further divided into 2.1 Questions with *ma* (吗), 2.2 Questions with *ba* (吧) and 2.3 Questions with *ne* (呢)).

- **Addition** — Other functions or points, which are not included in the Curriculum, are also discussed because of their importance and relevance to the chapter (e.g. the inclusion of other functions or points, which are not included in the Curriculum, are also discussed because of their importance and relevance to the chapter (e.g. the inclusion of *in Chapter 8.2, Stage 1*).

The book provides succinct, readable sections which set out the complexities of the language points featured. Generally, each chapter has two parts – the text, which contains the explanation of grammatical structures and examples; and the exercises, which are designed to be wide ranging and engaging.

In each chapter, the key language structure is displayed at the beginning together with sample sentences to provide a visual outline for learners. This is followed by plenty of useful examples with grammatical features marked out in a different colour to draw the learner’s attention to them. Chinese texts are fully annotated with *pinyin* alongside English translations. Different types of sentences including affirmatives, negatives and interrogatives are offered within each stage to give learners better exposure to the sentence pattern. Several “Did You Know” sections were offered in early chapters of the book to give learners a better knowledge of Chinese grammar. The “Tips” feature, which contains supplementary notes and sentence structures on extended language points or other forms of usage, occurs where required (e.g. “二 and 两” in Chapter 10, Stage 1).
Owing to the enormous population of China, numerous geographical linguistic groups and the long history of the development of the language, each word used in the grammatical point may have many synonyms. If these synonyms are interchangeable with the target word, they are then introduced in the entry, and may be used in the exercises.

Example sentences, in both text and exercises, relate to everyday life, touching on relevant topics such as nationalities and countries, geography, food, time-telling and the calendar, etc. This allows learners to focus on the real patterns of use of the language in meaningful contexts. Where relevant, comparison with the English language is also made, with examples showing the correct and wrong expressions.

Most of the vocabulary used in the book is taken from the "Basic 800 Chinese Characters — 常用汉语800字表" provided in the Curriculum by Hanban, and is carefully controlled at the appropriate level of learning and yet offers a certain degree of challenge. Example sentences and exercises are also crafted at the difficulty level of the particular stage, i.e., a grammatical feature or a language point that will be introduced at a later stage does not show up in the example sentences and exercises in an earlier stage. To aid learning, pinyin is added to difficult words in the exercises from Stages 1 to 4. These efforts are made to ensure greater accessibility of the content to the learner.

The pinyin rules are referenced from the Basic Regulations of Chinese Pinyin Spelling (中文拼音正词法基本规则). It should be noted that the characters 一 (yī, one) and 不 (bù, not) have varied pronunciations according to the context they are used in, as governed by rules. However, in the book they remain annotated as  yī and  bù, respectively.

The answer key at the end of the book offers only one answer to most questions. However, students are encouraged to explore other possible replies and discuss their suitability with their teachers. A glossary of grammatical terms is also included to aid understanding of unavoidable grammar jargon.

With grammar topics organised in a progressive manner and the avoidance of introducing grammatical points that have not been taught at that particular stage, each chapter can be studied independently to suit the needs of self study or class study.

We would like to thank Hanban and Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School Confucius Classroom for promoting this book through their International Chinese Teaching Resources Development Fund. We would also like to thank Professor Daniel Kane and Dr Liu Lening for contributing their forewords for this book.

It is our hope that this book will be a refreshing and ideal reference for learners of Chinese at all levels.

James Wu
Bai Lu
June 2011
Foreword (1)

This book is a very welcome addition to the textbooks available to speakers of English on the long road to proficiency in Chinese.

It is generally recognised that Chinese is not an easy language to learn, with the large number of characters which need to be learnt even for basic literacy, and the difficulty in pronouncing Chinese correctly, especially the use of tones.

The complexities of Chinese grammar are frequently overlooked. It is not uncommon in textbooks for beginners to read that “Chinese grammar is simple” compared to that of European languages, and that this is one of the less forbidding aspects of learning Chinese. The difficulties of Chinese grammar are of quite a different sort: precisely because there is so little “grammar”, or morphology to use the linguistic term, relationships between grammatical classes – subject, object, possession, location, tense, aspect, negation and so on – are expressed primarily by position and particles in ways which are quite hard for speakers of English to grasp. Indeed, deciding just what Chinese “grammar” is is a matter of great controversy even amongst Chinese linguists.

When the standard simplified characters and the standard romanisation system (pinyin) were being formulated in the 1950s, Chinese linguists were unable to decide on a standard grammatical system. Eventually, a temporary “Provisional System of Chinese Grammar for Use in Schools” was devised for the practical purpose of adopting what was “correct Chinese” for teaching in schools, and it has been revised several times since. This system is the basis of the grammar taught in language textbooks published in China, and has gradually become the de facto standard scheme, replacing other grammatical systems and terminology used in textbooks of Chinese published outside China in earlier decades. It is also the basis of the most recent curriculum for Chinese grammar issued by The Office of Chinese Language Council International.

James Wu has been one of the pioneers of Chinese language teaching in Australia for the last thirty years, during which he has amassed a large amount of personal, face-to-face experience in teaching Chinese to English speaking students, and identifying the problems generation after generation of students face in dealing with Chinese grammar. Bai Lu is a specialist in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language from the Beijing Languages University, the foremost university specialising in this field in China. The Chinese language is changing as quickly as everything else in China, and her input has ensured that the language in this book is up-to-date.

This book lists systematically the main features of modern Chinese grammar, set out in a way that makes learning and revision much easier than going through a textbook in which the grammar is presented piecemeal. The examples deliberately use a fairly restricted vocabulary, determined by the amount of Chinese students at beginning and intermediate levels actually know. The important point is clarity in expressing grammatical constructions rather than increasing vocabulary, as one might find in a textbook. I was particularly impressed by the way the negative forms of aspect particles and other words are presented (something which is not at all straightforward for the
English speaking learner) and by how some of the most difficult aspects of Chinese, such as the correct use of the particle *le* (顔), are explained.

This book encapsulates a lifetime’s teaching of Chinese to English speaking students in Australia, and I am delighted this experience can now reach a wider audience.

Daniel Kane
Head of Chinese Studies
Macquarie University
June 2011
I have come across numerous grammar books on Chinese, but quality grammar books for non-native learners of Chinese have been scarce. It is, therefore, a great joy to see the publication of *Chinese Grammar Step by Step*, a wonderful graded Chinese grammar book written based on the *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education*.

Language education is not about transmitting linguistic knowledge of the target language to its learners. It is about enabling learners to master the ability of using the language appropriately. However, without linguistic knowledge, this goal cannot be achieved. In the past, most efforts had been made in providing detailed, even exhaustive descriptions of the Chinese language. A few grammar books were produced for pedagogical purposes. Even if there were a small number of such books, they were not written with clear curriculum guidelines.

James Wu and Bai Lu are both experienced Chinese language teachers to non-native learners of Chinese. They felt the urgent need for a quality grammar book for Chinese study and instruction, and decided to take it upon themselves to accomplish this task. This culminated in their contribution of this unique book to the field of teaching Chinese as a second language.

There are a number of great features about this book. First of all, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first graded Chinese grammar book written based on the *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education*. It does not intend to provide exhaustive descriptions of the Chinese language, but rather leads users, students or instructors, step by step through the major grammatical structures of the language and presents them in stages. For instance, it does not introduce all Chinese comparative structures at once, but at two different stages, with the later stage presenting more complicated structures. Second, not only does it provide linguistic descriptions of Chinese grammar, it also offers great pedagogical assistance. I was greatly impressed by the chapter on time expressions, which uses many diagrams to indicate the relationships between different time expressions. They are extremely clear and helpful to users and the exercises on these expressions are beautifully designed and effective. Third, the explanations on grammatical structures are clear and accurate. The authors also provide further explanations for structures that look similar but are actually different. I believe users would find them easy to understand and very helpful. Fourth, except for a few early chapters, this book offers pinpointing and diverse exercises. They effectively help users develop both perceptive and productive abilities in the language. Lastly, this book is designed for both formal instruction and self-study. Its rich appendices make it very convenient for all types of users.

All the unique features mentioned above make this book a great contribution to the field of teaching Chinese as a second language. My congratulations go to James Wu, a good friend of mine, and Bai Lu, my dear fellow countrywoman from Xi’an. I look forward to seeing more of their published works in future.

*Lening Liu*

Professor of East Asian Languages & Cultures
Director of Chinese Language
Columbia University
June 2011
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sentences with verbal predicates</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Shi sentences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>You sentences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General questions with <code>ma</code>, <code>ba</code> and <code>ne</code>&lt;br&gt;用“吗”、“吧”、“呢”的一般疑问句</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Questions with <code>ma</code></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Questions with <code>ba</code></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Questions with <code>ne</code></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sentences with adjectival predicates</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sentences with nominal predicates</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Negative sentences with <code>bu</code></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Imperative sentences: For polite request&lt;br&gt;祈使句：表示请求、命令等</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Exclamatory sentences</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Personal pronouns</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Plural forms of personal pronouns</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Demonstrative pronouns</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Adverbs of degree as adverbials</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Numerals</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Common measure words (I)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The conjunction <code>he</code></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sentences with verbal predicates

A sentence generally consists of two parts: subject and predicate. The subject, typically a noun or a pronoun, is what (or whom) the sentence is about. The predicate tells something about the subject by indicating an action, a state or a fact.

A sentence with a verbal predicate contains a verb that indicates what the subject does. The verb usually takes a noun or pronoun as object. Most sentences in the Chinese language belong to this sentence type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>我姓王。</td>
<td>我姓王。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family name is Wang.</td>
<td>Michael speaks Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>莫丽学中文。</td>
<td>莫丽学中文。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo Li learns Chinese.</td>
<td>My elder sister buys books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>姐姐买书。</td>
<td>姐姐买书。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this chapter we introduce two common types of verbal-predicate sentences in Chinese.

Tip!

**Chinese verbs and inflection**

A unique feature of the Chinese language is that it depends on word order and sentence structure, rather than morphology (changes in word form), to indicate the word’s function in a sentence. Thus, Chinese verbs, unlike English verbs, do not inflect for tense, i.e., they do not change their verb forms to indicate when an action or state occurs.

In Chinese, the time of the action is generally expressed by placing a time expression before the verb or at the beginning of the sentence, by suffixing aspect particles 了 (le) (see Chapter 5, Stage 3; Chapter 2, Stage 4), 着 (zhe) (see Chapter 3, Stage 3) and 过 (guo) (see Chapter 3, Stage 4) to the verb, or by placing time adverbs like 正 (zhèng, right now) (see Chapter 2, Stage 3) or 已经 (yǐjīng, already) (see Chapter 1, Stage 4) before the verb.
1.1 *Shì* sentences “是”字句

**STRUCTURE**

subject + 是 + object

莫丽 是 美国人。

**A** The verb 是 (shì, to be) forms part of a verbal predicate to define someone (or something), or to indicate existence *(see Chapter 9.3, Stage 2)*. Here we discuss the first usage. It follows the subject and precedes a noun or a pronoun object. The subject is usually a proper noun (names of people, places, etc.) or a pronoun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>莫丽是美国人。</th>
<th>迈克是学生。</th>
<th>我是李明。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mo Li is American.</td>
<td>Michael is a student.</td>
<td>I am Li Ming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Personal pronouns are discussed in Chapter 8 of this stage.

**B** The 是 sentence is negated by placing the adverb 不 (bù, not) before 是.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>莫丽不是美国人。</th>
<th>我不是学生。</th>
<th>他不是老师。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mò Lì bù shì Měiguóérn.</td>
<td>Wǒ bù shì xuéshēng.</td>
<td>Tā bù shì lǎoshī.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo Li is not American.</td>
<td>I am not a student.</td>
<td>He is not a teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tip!**

The verb 是

A linking verb is a word used to link the subject of a sentence with a predicate. In English, the most common linking verb is the verb “to be”, e.g. She is a student. In Chinese, 是 may be viewed as the linking verb in sentences with verbal predicates, as introduced above. However, not all sentence types in Chinese require the use of a linking verb. Sentences with adjectival predicates, for example, express states and qualities using stative verbs without the need for a linking verb *(see Chapter 3, Stage 1)*. Sentences with nominal predicates may also be formed without a linking verb *(see Chapter 4, Stage 1)*.

The major difference between 是 and its English equivalent “to be” can be seen in sentences with adjectival predicates. For example, in the English sentence “She is tall”, the adjective “tall” becomes a stative verb 高 (gāo) in Chinese, meaning “to be tall”. Thus, the Chinese translation is “她很高。” (Tā hěn gāo.) instead of “她是高。” (Tā shì gāo.)

Unlike other Chinese verbs, 是 cannot take the aspect particles 了, 着 and 过.
1.2 有 sentences “有”字句

**STRUCTURE**

- starting point + 有 + verb (phrase)

我 有 一个弟弟。

**A** The verb **有** (yǒu, to have) is mainly used in verbal-predicate sentences to indicate possession or existence (see Chapter 9.2, Stage 2). We only discuss the first usage here. Similar to 是, it follows the subject and precedes a noun object.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>我有 一个弟弟。</th>
<th>他有 电子词典。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ yǒu yī gè dìdi.</td>
<td>Tā yǒu diǎnzì cídiǎn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have a younger brother.

He has an electronic dictionary.

*The use of measure words for nouns is discussed in Chapter 11, Stage 1, and Chapter 14, Stage 2.

**B** The negative form of **有** is **没有** (méiyǒu, not have).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>我没有弟弟。</th>
<th>他没有电子词典。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ méiyǒu dìdi.</td>
<td>Tā méiyǒu diǎnzì cídiǎn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I don’t have a younger brother.

He doesn’t have an electronic dictionary.

**NOTE** In the negative form, there is no need to quantify what one doesn’t possess. We do not say:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>我没有三个弟弟。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ méiyǒu sān gè dìdi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I don’t have three younger brothers.

---

Did you know?

**Mashi Wentong**

The first book on Chinese grammar written in Chinese was published in 1898, entitled *Mashi Wentong* (马氏文通, Mǎshì WénTōng). It was written by Ma Jianzhong (马建忠), a scholar and politician from Jiangsu Province. Born in 1845, he studied in France and was fluent in English, French, Greek and Latin.

*Mashi Wentong* explains the grammar of classical Chinese, using Latin grammar as a guide with many selected sentences from Chinese classical works. It contains ten chapters discussing a comprehensive list of words and main grammatical rules of the Chinese language. Since its publication, this book has been a great influence on most of the grammar books that have followed it.
STATE 1

EXERCISES

I. State the nationality or occupation of the people in the pictures using 是. The helping words are provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jǐngchá 警察</td>
<td>Aōdàiyuán 澳大利亚人</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhòngguórén 中国人</td>
<td>lǎoshī 老师</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Nicole Kidman (nationality)

2. Anna (occupation)

3. Janet (occupation)

4. Zhōu Rùnfā 周润发 (nationality)

II. Based on the pictures, state the number of siblings each of these people has using 有.

1.

2. 

3. Tom

4. Jennifer
In Chinese, questions can be formed in the following ways:
1. adding particles 吗 (ma), 吧 (ba) or 呢 (ne) to the end of declarative sentences (affirmative or negative);
2. using question words (see Chapter 8, Stage 2; Chapters 14-15, Stage 3);
3. using affirmative-negative adjective or verb forms (see Chapter 13, Stage 3);
4. using the conjunction 还是 (hàishi, or) to form alternative questions (see Chapter 12, Stage 3).

In this chapter we will discuss 1, and the examples are restricted to those with verbal predicates. Questions formed from sentences with adjectival and nominal predicates are discussed in the next two chapters (Chapters 3 and 4) respectively.

2.1 Questions with ma 用“吗”的疑问句

**STRUCTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sentence</th>
<th>吗？</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>迈克是大学生吗？</td>
<td>吗？</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

吗 is used for general situations. It is added at the end of the sentence with no change in the word order. Questions with 吗 are generally yes-no questions, and the answer is usually expressed by using the verb in the question. If the answer is “no”, 不 (bù, not) or 没 (méi, not have) precedes the verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>迈克是大学生吗？</td>
<td>是。 / 不是。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māikè shì dàxuéshēng ma？</td>
<td>Shì. / Bù shì.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>麦丽有姐姐吗？</td>
<td>有。 / 没有。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mò Lì yǒu jiějie ma？</td>
<td>Yǒu. / Méiyou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>弟弟去学校吗？</td>
<td>去。 / 不去。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dìdi qù xuékào ma？</td>
<td>Qù. / Bù qù.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Cengage Learning Asia Pte Ltd
The reply may also begin with 是 (affirmative) or 不 (negative), followed by a statement that retains the word order in the question. In response to the same questions above, the reply can be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>是，迈克是大学生。 / 不，迈克不是大学生。</th>
<th>是，莫丽有两个姐姐。 / 不，莫丽没有姐姐。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Michael is a university student. / No, Michael is not a university student.</td>
<td>Yes, Mo Li has two elder sisters. / No, Mo Li doesn’t have elder sisters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>是，弟弟去学校。 / 不，弟弟不去学校。</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shi, dìdì qù xuéxiào. / Bù, dìdì bù qù xuéxiào.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, younger brother is going to school. / No, younger brother is not going to school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2 Questions with ba 用“吧” 的疑问句

**STRUCTURE**

```
sentence + 吧?
```

吧 is used to seek confirmation where the answer is usually assumed or expected. Questions with 吧 are similar to phrases like “is(n’t) he”, “do(n’t) you”, etc. in English questions. The reply is the same as those to 吗 questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>迈克是大学生吧？ Māikè shì dàxuéshēng ba? Michael is a university student, isn’t he?</td>
<td>是。 / 不是。 Shi. / Bù shì. Yes. / No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>莫丽有姐姐吧？ Mò Lì yǒu jiějiě ba? Mo Li has an elder sister, hasn’t she?</td>
<td>有。 / 没有。 Yǒu. / Méiyǒu. Yes. / No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with 吗 questions, the reply may also begin with 是 (affirmative) or 不 (negative), followed by a statement that retains the word order in the question.
2.3 Questions with ne 用“呢” 的疑问句

**STRUCTURE**

sentence, noun/pronoun + 呢?

迈克是大学生，你呢？

**A** 呢 is normally used to form a question tag (see Chapter 15, Stage 3, for more forms of question tags), similar to “what about you?” or “and you?” in English. It is placed after a noun or pronoun to ask a follow-up question on the preceding statement. The reply follows the word order in the question with or without the object, adding the adverb 也 (yě, also, too) (cf. Chapter 15.2, Stage 2) before the verb for an affirmative answer, and 不 or 没 for a negative one. In some cases where the reply is different from what is stated in the question, the answer may go beyond a simple “yes” or “no”.

- **Questions**
  - 迈克是大学生，你呢？
    - 《Chinese Grammar Step by Step》
  - 莫丽有一个弟弟，你呢？
    - 《Chinese Grammar Step by Step》
  - 我吃面，你呢？
    - 《Chinese Grammar Step by Step》

- **Answers**
  - 我也是（大学生）。
  - 我没有（弟弟）。
  - 我吃三明治。

**B** 呢 can be placed at the end of a noun or noun phrase to form “where” questions.

- 老师呢？
  - Where’s the teacher?
- 自行车呢？
  - Where’s the bicycle?
- 电子词典呢？
  - Where’s the electronic dictionary?

**C** It can also be placed at the end of a question containing a question word (cf. Chapter 8, Stage 2) to express a moderate questioning tone.

- 莫丽说什么呢？
  - What did Mo Li say?
EXERCISES 练习

I

Answer the following questions according to the pictures.

1. 她们是老师吗？
   ____________________
   ____________________

2. Brenda 喜欢猫吗？
   ____________________
   ____________________

3. 王丽是医生吧？
   ____________________
   ____________________

4. Vivian 吃什么呢？
   ____________________
   ____________________

5. Josh 有哥哥吧？
   ____________________
   ____________________

II

Translate the following into Chinese.

1. Is Michael British?
   ____________________

2. Do you have younger sisters?
   ____________________

3. You are a teacher, aren’t you?
   ____________________

4. Mo Li has an elder brother, hasn’t she?
   ____________________

5. I am Chinese. What about you?
   ____________________
3

Sentences with adjectival predicates

形容词谓语句

A An adjectival predicate describes the subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>我 capitalize 繁忙。</th>
<th>他 capitalize 疲劳。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ hén mánɡ.</td>
<td>Tā hén lèi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am busy.</td>
<td>He is tired.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B Unlike in English, Chinese adjectival predicates do not follow a linking verb, as Chinese adjectives can function as stative verbs. A degree adverb must always be used to modify the adjective in the adjectival predicate, the most common of which is 很 (hén, very). It is often unstressed in reading and does not really mean “very”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>我 capitalize 妈妈 很 好。</th>
<th>她 capitalize 姐姐 很 漂亮。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ māmā hén hǎo.</td>
<td>Tā jiějie hén piàoliang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mum is well.</td>
<td>Her sister is beautiful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C Other degree adverbs like 真 (zhēn, really), 特别 (tèbié, exceptionally), 非常 (fēichāng, extremely) etc. may replace 很 to modify the predicate. They are normally stressed in reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>这个房子 真大。</th>
<th>天气 特别好。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhège fángzi zhēn dà.</td>
<td>Tiānqì tèbié hǎo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This house is really big.</td>
<td>The weather is exceptionally good.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Demonstrative pronouns are discussed in Chapter 8.2 of this stage.
If 很 is absent in the affirmative, the sentence usually implies a contrast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>这本书便宜，那本书贵。</th>
<th>这本书不贵。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhè běn shū piányi, nà běn shū guì.</td>
<td>Zhè běn shū bù guì.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This book is cheap. That book is expensive.</td>
<td>This book is not expensive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the negative, 不 (bù, no/not) is placed before the adjective and there is no need for a degree adverb. The degree adverb 太 (tài, too) or 很 can be used after 不 to moderate the tone of negation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>这本书不贵。</th>
<th>这个问题不大。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhè běn shū bù guì.</td>
<td>Zhè ge wèntí bù dà.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This book is not expensive.</td>
<td>This is not a big problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>迈克不很忙。</td>
<td>妈妈不太高兴。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māi kè bù hěn máng.</td>
<td>Mā ma bù tài gāoxìng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael is not very busy.</td>
<td>Mum is not too happy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sentences with adjectival predicates can be made into questions by placing 吗 (má) or 吧 (ba) at the end of the sentence, or using 呢 (ne) to form a tag expression (cf. Chapters 2 and 4, Stage 1). For questions with 吗, the degree adverb may be omitted.

The reply is usually expressed by repeating the adjective in the question, preceded by a degree adverb. If the answer is negative, 不 is added before the adjective.

**Questions** | **Answers**
--- | ---
你忙吗？<br>Ní máng ma?<br>Are you busy? | 很忙。<br>Hěn máng.<br>Yes.
你很累吧？<br>Ní hěn lèi ba?<br>You’re tired, aren’t you? | 很累。<br>Hěn lèi.<br>Yes, I am.
我很高兴，你呢？<br>Wǒ hěn gāoxìng, nǐ ne?<br>I’m happy. What about you? | 我不高兴。<br>Wǒ bù gāoxìng.<br>No, I’m not.
Look at the pictures and fill in the blanks using appropriate adjectives or adverbs.

1. 这个房子____大，那个房子____大。
   这个房子大，那个房子____。

2. 妈妈____胖，爸爸____胖。
   爸爸胖，妈妈____。

3. 早上____热，晚上____热。
   早上热，晚上____。

4. 这条裙子____长，那条裙子____长。
   这条裙子长，那条裙子____。

Correct the mistakes in the following sentences.

1. 这条裤子是长。
   __________________________

2. 北京大学非常很大。
   __________________________

3. 今天我不是累。
   __________________________

4. 红色裙子不真漂亮。
   __________________________

5. 这间厕所很是非常干净。
   __________________________
Sentences with nominal predicates

A nominal predicate contains a noun or noun phrase that indicates age, nationality, place of birth, date, time, price, etc. It provides information about the subject preceding it. Unlike in English, and similar to Chinese adjectival predicates, nominal predicates in Chinese do not require a linking verb.

**Structure**

subject + age / nationality / place of birth

A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>王丽 20 岁。</th>
<th>迈克美国人。</th>
<th>李明 上海人。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(age)</td>
<td>(nationality)</td>
<td>(place of birth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wáng Lí èrshí suì.</td>
<td>Mài kè Měiguó rén.</td>
<td>Lí Míng Shànghǎi rén.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo Li is 20 years old.</td>
<td>Michael is American.</td>
<td>Li Ming is Shanghainese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B

The predicate is negated by placing 不是 (bù shì, no, not) before it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>王丽 不是20岁。</th>
<th>迈克 不是美国人。</th>
<th>李明 不是上海人。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(age)</td>
<td>(nationality)</td>
<td>(place of birth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wáng Lí bù shì èrshí suì.</td>
<td>Mài kè bù shì Měiguó rén.</td>
<td>Lí Míng bù shì Shànghǎi rén.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo Li is not 20 years old.</td>
<td>Michael is not American.</td>
<td>Li Ming is not Shanghainese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C

Similar to sentences with verbal and adjectival predicates, sentences with nominal predicates can be made into questions by placing 吗 (ma) or 吧 (ba) at the end of the sentence, or using 呢 (ne) to form a tag expression (cf. Chapters 2 and 3, Stage 1). The reply is the same as those discussed in Chapter 2 of this stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>王丽 20 岁吗？</td>
<td>是。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(age)</td>
<td>(Shi.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wáng Lí èrshí suì ma?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>迈克美国人吧？</td>
<td>不是。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(nationality)</td>
<td>(bù shì)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mài kè Měiguó rén ba?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>王明上海人，你呢？</td>
<td>我也是 上海人。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(place of birth)</td>
<td>(wǒ yě shì Shànghǎi rén.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wáng Míng Shànghǎi rén, nǐ ne?</td>
<td>I'm also Shanghainese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A nominal predicate contains a noun or noun phrase that indicates age, nationality, place of birth, date, time, price, etc (the latter two are discussed in Chapter 3, Stage 2).
A sentence with a nominal predicate is often used to list items to show contrast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>莫丽北京人，你上海人，我香港人。</td>
<td>Mo Li Běijīngrén, nǐ Shànghǎirén, wǒ Xiānggǎngrén.</td>
<td>Mo Li is from Beijing. You’re from Shanghai. I’m from Hong Kong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>爸爸50岁，妈妈48岁，我24岁。</td>
<td>Bābā wǔshí suì, Māmā sìshíbā suì, wǒ èrshí suì.</td>
<td>Dad is 50 years old. Mum is 48 years old. I am 24 years old.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** Sentences with nominal predicates are usually short, and they are more frequently used in spoken Chinese.

---

### EXERCISES 练习

#### I

Fill in the blanks with nominal predicates using the hints provided.

1. **Age**
   - 爷爷________ (80)。
   - 奶奶________ (78)。
   - 爸爸________ (55)。
   - 妈妈________ (53)。
   - 我________ (20)。

2. **Nationality**
   - 托尼________
   - 莫丽________
   - 迈克________
   - 琳达________

3. **Place of birth**
   - 小兰________
   - 小竹________
   - 小梅________
   - 小菊________

#### II

Change the following sentences into questions.

1. 龙东加拿大人。
   - _______

2. 丽娜16岁。
   - _______

3. 她香港人。
   - _______

4. 老师40岁。
   - _______

5. 迈克美国人。
   - _______
5 Negative sentences with ǒù

用“不”的否定句

**Structure**

subject + ǒ + verb phrase

我 ǒ 不 喜欢唱歌。

A We discussed in Chapter 1.1 of this stage that the adverb ǒ (ǒù, not) can be used to negate sentences. As a negator, ǒ can also negate other verbs that follow it to indicate an intentional (non)action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>我不 喜欢唱歌。</th>
<th>我不学法语。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ bù xǐhuān chāng gē.</td>
<td>Wǒ bù xué Fǎyǔ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't like singing.</td>
<td>I don't learn French.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B It can also refer to actions in the past and future contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>我以前 不 吃肉。</th>
<th>我明天 不 去学校。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ yǐqián bù chǐ ròu.</td>
<td>Wǒ míngtiān bù qù xuékào.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t used to eat meat.</td>
<td>I’m not going to school tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercises**

I Answer the following questions with negative answers using ǒ.

1. 你 ǒ 喜欢跳舞吗？
2. 你 ǒ 学德语吗？
3. 上海是 ǒ 中国 (的) 首都吗？

II Rearrange the words to form proper sentences.

1. 不 ǒ 妈 妈 ǒ 上 明 天 班
2. ǒ 以前 莫 ǒ 丽 喝酒 不
3. 喜 ǒ 欢 踢 小王 篮 球 足 球 喜 ǒ 欢 打 不