

Berrien Springs Partnership Course Syllabus and Instructor Qualifications

2025-2026

Community Class Title: Conversational Chinese Year 1-4

Instructor Name: Wenjie Xu

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Grades: 3-8

Class Format: Online

Class Day/Time: Wednesdays 7:00 PM-8:00 PM

Thursday 11:00 AM-12:00 noon

Or contact the instructor for other arrangements

Start Date: the last week of August

End Date: the 1st week of May, the ending date may be subject to change due to holidays, etc.

of weeks: 16 weeks for Semester 1 and 16 weeks for Semester 2

of hours: 16 Hours for Semester 1 and 16 Hours for Semester 2

Additional registration at the site required: No

Materials Needed for Class: A binder to hold class homework sheets, a pencil, and a notebook

Pre-requisites: Little or no knowledge.

Instructor Qualifications:

Ms. Xu holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree. After earning her master's from Beijing University of Science and Technology, she became a teacher at Beijing Normal University. Upon moving to the U.S., she continued her studies at Louisiana State University and later at Washington University in St. Louis.

She is deeply passionate about teaching and education, and has been teaching Chinese in various schools across the U.S. for over 12 years. She currently focuses on online instruction through Berrien Springs Homeschool Partnership and Three Rivers community schools in Michigan.

Course Description:

With engaging content and an effective teaching approach, our courses are designed to help students learn Chinese with ease and confidence. Our classes promote active learning by using vocabulary and sentence structures in real-life contexts and creating situations where students can apply what they've learned. We also keep class sizes small to ensure each student has ample opportunities to interact and practice speaking Chinese with the instructor and peers.

We offer classes at various levels to meet students' different learning needs. All students—except complete beginners—will take a placement assessment before starting their

course. Our curriculum covers the four essential skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with a stronger emphasis on conversation.

In our Year One course, students will begin by learning Pinyin, tones, basic Chinese characters, and Chinese typing. They will then build essential vocabulary and sentence patterns needed for everyday communication. By the end of the course, students will have a solid foundation in Chinese and be able to hold simple conversations on topics such as greetings, dates, age, phone numbers, family, self-introduction, school, jobs, and hobbies.

Cultural understanding is also a key component of our program. Students will explore Chinese culture through songs, videos, authentic stories, and more.

Course Year One Topics

- Chinese Four Tones/Pinyin/Typing
- Chinese Writing System (Radical/Stroke order/Basic Characters)
- Classroom Survival Expressions
- Greetings/Self-Introduction
- Dates
- Age
- Telephone Number
- Family
- School
- Job
- Hobbies
- Writing Short Essays
- Giving Short Speeches
- Chinese Culture/Holidays/Customs

Please take a few minutes to browse our website linked above to see the details of the different levels of classes.

Conversational Chinese Year 1 Main reference books:

Easy Steps to Chinese, Vol. 1 textbook, Ma, Yanmin, and Li, Xinying. Beijing Language and Culture University Press.

Easy Steps to Chinese, Vol. 1 workbook, Ma, Yanmin, and Li, Xinying. Beijing Language and Culture University Press.

Homework:

Students will have approximately 30 minutes to an hour of homework each class so that they can continue to practice new sounds, vocabulary, and sentences taught during each week's lesson. I will send out the homework sheets after each class and check them at the beginning of the next lesson.

Assessments: Students' homework and class participation will be looked at to evaluate their progress.

Class Policies:

Attendance: Students must attend at least 80% of the lessons

Make-up classes: Absences beyond the approved absences can be made up at the end of the semester.

Behavior: Students come to the class on time, and advance notice should be given for absences. Students are prepared for classes (dress appropriately, bring completed homework, a pencil, and a notebook). Students are respectful towards others and put forth their best effort in class.

Conversational Chinese Year 1 Semester 1- Class Focus and Activities

Weeks	Week of	Focus	Activities
Week 1	8/25 First day of school	-Pinyin: Simple Finals -Vocabulary: Numbers and Counting	1. Go over the requirements and expectations of the class. 2. Introduce what the Chinese language is and tell a story behind the characters. 3. Explain what Pinyin is, why Pinyin was created, and the components of Pinyin. 4. Learn to pronounce the tones and three simple finals: a o e. 5. Learn to pronounce, recognize, and write numbers 1-5.
Week 2	9/1	-Pinyin: Simple Finals -Vocabulary: Numbers and Counting	1. Learn to pronounce three Simple Finals: i u ü. 2. Learn to pronounce, recognize, and write numbers 6-10. 3. A Chinese story: <i>It's hard to write the character 'wan' (ten thousand)</i> .
Week 3	9/8	-Pinyin: Initials -Vocabulary: Numbers and Counting	1. Learn to pronounce eight Initials: b p m f d t n l. 2. Learn to count numbers: 1-100. 3. Learn a measure word and how to count people. 4. A famous Chinese myth: <i>Houyi and Ten Suns</i> .
Week 4	9/15	-Pinyin: Initials -Vocabulary: Nature	1. Learn to pronounce six new Initials: j q x g k h. 2. Learn how to mark tones. 3. Learn characters "sun, moon, water, fire, mountain, rock, dirt, field, tree, crop" and related vocabulary. 4. Culture: The Chinese five elements of Earth.
Week 5	9/22	-Pinyin: Initials -Vocabulary: Comparing	1. Learn to pronounce four new Initials: zh ch sh r. 2. Learn characters "top, middle, bottom," and related vocabulary. 3. Learn characters "big, small, many, few" and related vocabulary. 4. A story: <i>Big Cat, Little Cat</i>
Week 6	9/29	-Pinyin: Initials -Vocabulary: Body Parts	1. Learn to pronounce three new Initials: z c s. 2. Learn characters "head, heart, mouth, ear, eye, eyebrow, hand, foot" and related vocabulary.

			<p>3. Sing a Chinese song: My Eyes</p> <p>4. A Fable: <i>Blind Men Touch the Elephant</i>.</p>
Week 7	10/6	<p>-Pinyin: Initials</p> <p>-Vocabulary: People</p>	<p>1. Learn to pronounce two new Initials: y w.</p> <p>2. Learn characters “man, woman, father, son, sit, stand, walk,” and related vocabulary.</p> <p>3. Understand and learn how to give orders such as “stand up, sit down, take a walk,” etc, and play ‘Simon Says’ to practice these new commands.</p> <p>4. A traditional Chinese saying: Stand like a pine tree and sit like a clock.</p>
Week 8	10/13	<p>-Pinyin: Compound Final</p> <p>-Vocabulary: Animals</p>	<p>1. Learn to pronounce three Compound Finals: ai ei ui.</p> <p>2. Learn the characters “horse, ox, sheep, fish, bug, bird,” and related vocabulary.</p> <p>3. A classical children's story: <i>A Little Horse Crosses the River</i>.</p>
Week 9	10/20	<p>-Pinyin: Compound Finals</p> <p>-Vocabulary: Weather</p>	<p>1. Learn to pronounce three new Compound Finals: ao ou iu.</p> <p>2. Learn the characters” wind, rain, snow, cloud, lightning, sky,” and related vocabulary.</p> <p>3. Chinese Joke: The Sky.</p> <p>4. A Chinese story: <i>Borrow Arrows with Thatched Boats</i>.</p>
Week 10	10/27	<p>-Pinyin: Compound Finals</p> <p>-Seasons</p>	<p>1. Learn to pronounce three new Compound Finals: ie üe er.</p> <p>2. Learn how to build associative compound characters by using two simple characters.</p> <p>3. Learn characters “Spring, Fall, Summer, Winter,” and related vocabulary.</p> <p>4. Use the sentence structure “I like...” to express your favorite season.</p> <p>5. Chinese Culture: Four Plants for the Four Seasons</p> <p>6. A chinese Story: <i>Si Maguang and Water Tank</i>.</p>
Week 11	11/3	<p>-Pinyin: Compound Finals</p> <p>-Students</p>	<p>1. Learn to pronounce front Nasal Compound Vowels: an en in un ün.</p> <p>2. Introduce what a radical is.</p> <p>3. Learn how to build associative compound characters by using a radical and a simple character.</p> <p>4. Learn vocabulary,” primary school students, middle school students, high school students, and college students,” and related vocabulary.</p> <p>5. Use the sentence structure “I am ...” to introduce oneself.</p> <p>6. A chinese story: <i>Dig a Hole in a Wall to Steal Light</i>.</p>
Week 12	11/10	<p>-Pinyin: Compound Finals</p> <p>-Family</p>	<p>1. Learn to pronounce back nasal Compound Vowels: ang eng ing ong.</p> <p>2. Learn how to build pictophonetic compound characters using radical and pronunciation parts.</p> <p>3. Learn compound Characters “Dad, Mom, sisters, brothers”, and related vocabulary.</p> <p>4. Use sentence structure “There are...” to talk about how many people are in the family and learn to use 'I love + a family member” in a sentence and a conversation.</p> <p>5. Song: I love Dad and Mom.</p> <p>6. A classical children story: <i>Kongrong Shares the Pears</i>.</p>

Week 13	11/17	-Greetings -Learning how to type in Chinese	1. Have a comprehensive Pinyin Review (Part 1): 6 simple finals and 23 initials. 2. Greeting people and related vocabulary. 3. Simplified Chinese vs. Traditional Chinese. 4. How the tone changes when two third-tone syllables appear together. 5. Learn to type in Chinese.
	11/24		No school, Thanksgiving
Week 14	12/1	-Poite Expressions	1. Have a comprehensive Pinyin Review (Part 2): 16 Special sounds and 18 Compound Consonants. 2. Express and accept "Thanks" graciously. 3. Make and accept apologies gracefully. 4. Sing a song: Thank you. 5. A classic children's story: <i>Little Tadpoles Looking for Their Mom</i> .
Week 15	12/8	-Introduce Oneself	1. Have a comprehensive Pinyin Review(part (3): Practicing tone pairs and summarize tone change rules. 2. Learn how to ask the name and introduce oneself. 3. Learn Chinese Grammar: how to ask a question with "what" in Chinese. 4. The culture of Chinese names.
Week 16	12/15	Class Review and Final Presentation	1. Have an active recall of what we've learned in class. 2. Each student will make a short speech in Chinese for the class. 3. A famous Chinese myth: <i>Pangu Separated Heaven from Earth</i> .
	12/22		No School, Winter Break
	12/29		No School, Winter Break

The above schedule may be subject to change, and advance notice will be given when such changes occur.

Conversational Chinese Year 1 Semester 2 - Class Focus and Activities:

Weeks		Focus	Class Activities
Week 1	1/5 2nd Semester Starts	Dates - Months and Days	1. Go over the requirements and expectations of the class 2. Learn to say and recognize the 12 months of the year and the 7 days of the week. 3. Practice using simple sentences to talk about today, yesterday, and tomorrow. 4. Sing a fun "Days of the Week" Rhyming Song

Week 2	1/12	Dates -Years, Dates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Say the year and the full date. 2. Practice asking and answering questions about the year, the date, and the day of the week. 3. learn cultural facts about the Chinese New Year.
Week 3	1/19	Ages- Birthdays and Birth Years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn how to say birth years and birthdays in Chinese. 2. Practice asking and answering questions about birthdays. 3. Culture Connection: Zodiac Animals
Week 4	1/26	Ages-Asking About Age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn how to ask and answer questions about age in Mandarin. 2. Practice numbers and age-related sentence structures. 3. Introduce a famous Chinese story: <i>Cao Chong Weighs the Elephant</i>.
Week 5	2/2	Telephone Numbers and Where Do You Live	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask and answer about home phone numbers. 2. Ask and answer about where someone lives. 3. Learn about Beijing's famous landmarks and cultural significance. 4. Engage with the song "Beijing Welcomes You" to improve listening skills and understand Chinese music culture.
Week 6	2/9	Class Review and Presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have an active recall of what we've learned in class. 2. Each student will make a short speech in Chinese for the class. 3. Chinese Story: <i>Nvwa Created people</i>.
Week 7	2/16	All about me and my family	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Say your name and age in Chinese 2. Talk about how many people are in your family 3. List family members in Chinese (爸爸, 妈妈, 哥哥, 姐姐, etc.) 4. Write a short family introduction 5. Watch and understand a video of native Chinese people talking about their pets. 6. Chinese culture: <i>Chinese Family Values</i>.
Week 8	2/23	Talking About Family Members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask and answer how many people are in your family 2. Identify and name family members 3. Use demonstratives like “这个” (this) and “那个” (that) in context 4. Draw a picture of the family and label each person using Chinese family terms. 5. Practice in pairs with mini conversations using pictures. 6. Watch and understand a video of two native Chinese people talking about their family members.
Week 9	3/2	Self-introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce yourself: name, age, birthday, grade, and where you live. 2. Talk about siblings (or say you don't have any). 3. Students write their introduction using the given template. 4. Culture Connection: Briefly introduce where Hong Kong is and some cultural features.
Week 10	3/9	Talking About School and Nationality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask and answer what grade someone is in 2. Talk about school level (小学生 vs 中学生)

			3. Ask and say where you're from / your nationality 4. Use the phrase "一半是..." to express mixed heritage 5. Dialogue Role-Play 6. Watch and understand a video of people talking about their nationality in Chinese.
	3/16		No School, Spring Break
Week 11	3/23	My Family and Their Jobs Part 1	1. Introduce your family members and the number of people in your family 2. Say where your family lives 3. Describe your family members' jobs 4. Students introduce their families with 3–5 sentences. 5. Culture Mini-Spotlight: Shanghai上海
Week 12	3/30	My Family and Their Jobs Part 2	1. Talk about siblings and only-child status. 2. Ask and answer if someone's parents work. 3. Build a conversation using a question/answer format. 4. Briefly introduce the idea of China's One-Child Policy.
Week 13	4/6	Class Review and Presentation	1. Have an active recall of what we've learned in class. 2. Each student will make a short speech in Chinese for the class. 3. Chinese Story: <i>Chang'e Flying to the Moon</i> .
Week 14	4/13	Extra Materials 1: Job	1. Watch and understand two videos of native Chinese talking about the jobs. 2. Recognize common job vocabulary in Chinese (e.g., doctor, teacher) 3. Understand and respond to basic job-related questions: What job do you do? Where do you work? 4. Discussion Prompt: What job do you want in the future?
Week 15	4/20	Extra Materials 2: Hobbies	1. Watch and understand 3 videos of native Chinese people talking about their hobbies. <i>-I Like to Read</i> <i>-I Like to Watch Movies</i> <i>-He likes to listen to music</i> 2. Learn and practice expressing hobbies and interests in Chinese 3. Ask and answer questions about what people like to do 4. Discussion Prompt: What do you like to do?
Week 16	4/27	Extra Materials 3: School	1. Watch and understand two videos: <i>-My Chinese Teacher.</i> <i>-Speaking Chinese is Cool.</i> 2. Improve listening comprehension 3. Recognize simple Chinese phrases from real-world contexts 4. Express opinions about learning Chinese

Summer Challenge			To prevent summer knowledge loss and keep their brains active in Chinese, students will receive summer study resources at the end of the school year.
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