

Reader Level
Breakthrough

Unique Characters
150

小明

Xiǎo Míng

Xiao Ming, Boy Sherlock

John Pasden and Jared Turner



**Mandarin
Companion**

Chinese Graded Readers

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Welcome to Mandarin Companion!

We've worked hard to create enjoyable stories that can help you build confidence and competence and get better at Chinese—at the right level for you.

Our graded readers have controlled and simplified language that allows you to bring together the language you've learned so far and absorb how words work naturally together. Research suggests that learners need to “encounter” a word 10-30 times before truly learning it. Graded readers provide the repetition that you need to develop fluency NOW at your level.

In the next section, you can take an assessment and discover if this is the right level for you. We also explain how it won't just improve your Chinese skills but will have a wide range of benefits, from better test scores to increased confidence.

We hope you enjoy our books, and best of luck with your studies.
Jared and John

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you have versions with pinyin over the characters?

No. Although this method is common for native Chinese learners, research and experience show it distracts a second language learner and slows down their ability to learn the characters. If you require pinyin to read most of the characters at this level, you should read something easier.

Is there an English translation of the story?

No. Research and experience show that an English translation will slow down the development of your Chinese language learning skills.

Is this the right level for me?

Let's find out. Open to a story page with characters and start reading. Keep track of the number of characters you *don't* know but don't count any key words you don't know. If there are more than 5 unknown characters on that page, you may want to consider working on your basic character recognition before attempting a graded reader. If the unknown characters are fewer than 5, then this book is likely at your level! If you find that you know all the characters, you may be ready for a higher level. However, even if you know all the characters but are reading slowly, you should consider building reading speed before moving up a level.

How do you decide which characters to include at each level?

Each level includes a core set of characters based on our extensive analysis of the most common characters and words taught to and used by those learning Chinese as a second language. All books at each level are based on the same core set and they can be read in any order.

What to expect in a Breakthrough book?

It's important that you read at the level that is right for you. Check out the next page to learn more about Extensive Reading and how we use that in graded readers to support the learning of Chinese by just enjoying a good story.

Books in our Breakthrough Level like this one:

- Include a core set of 150 Chinese words and characters learners are most likely to know.
- Are about 5,000 characters in length
- Use level appropriate grammar

- Include pinyin and a translation of words and characters you are not expected to know at this level
- Include a glossary at the back of book
- Include proper nouns that are underlined

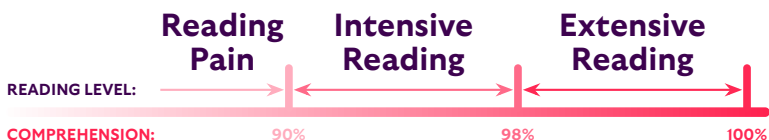
What is Extensive Reading?

It will improve test scores, your reading speed and comprehension, speaking, listening and writing skills. You'll pick up grammar naturally, you'll begin understanding in Chinese, your confidence will improve, and you'll enjoy learning the language.

Graded Readers are based on science that is backed by mountains of research and proven by learners all over the world. They are founded on the theories of Extensive Reading and Comprehensible Input.

Extensive Reading is reading at a level where you can understand almost all of what you are reading (ideally 98%) at a comfortable speed, as opposed to stumbling through dense paragraphs word by word.

When you read extensively, you'll understand most of the words and find yourself fully engaged with the story.



Reading at 98% comprehension is the sweet spot to max out your learning gains. You do still learn at the Intensive Reading level (90–98%), but the closer you are to the Extensive level, the faster your progress.

No one should be reading below a 90% comprehension level.

It's called Reading Pain for a reason. You spend so much time in a dictionary and after 30 painful minutes on ONE paragraph, you're not even sure what you've just read!

If you want to know more, check out our website

www.mandarincompanion.com



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Story Notes

This is Mandarin Companion's unique take on how young 高明 (Gāo Míng), our own Sherlock Holmes character, got his start. The name he goes by in this story, 小明 (Xiǎo Míng), is a common boy's nickname used in traditional Chinese stories and textbooks. As an added bonus, when the character Xiao Ming is used in Chinese textbooks, he is often portrayed as the brightly observant, front-row-sitting, apt pupil.

This story ties into the larger "Mandarin Companion Universe." If you're curious how things turn out for him, you'll definitely want to prepare to read *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Curly-Haired Company*, a Mandarin Companion Level 1 story, as well as *Sherlock Holmes and a Scandal in Shanghai*, a Mandarin Companion Level 2 story.

Character Adaptations

The following is a list of the characters from this Chinese story followed by their corresponding English names from John Pasden and Jared Turner's original story. The names below are not translations; they are new Chinese names used for the Chinese versions of the original characters. Think of them as all-new characters in a Chinese story.

小明 (Xiǎo Míng) – Xiao Ming

小天 (Xiǎo Tiān) – Xiao Tian

欢欢 (Huānhuān) – Huanhuan

大头 (Dàtóu) – Datou

小月 (Xiǎo Yuè) – Xiao Yue

小四 (Xiǎosì) – Xiaosi

方学东 (Fāng Xuédōng) – Fang Xuedong

方太太 (Fāng Tàitai) – Mrs. Fang

马太太 (Mǎ Tàitai) – Mrs. Ma

Cast of Characters



小明

(Xiǎo Míng)



小天

(Xiǎo Tiān)



欢欢
(Huānhuān)



大头
(Dàtóu)



小月
(Xiǎo Yuè)



小四
(Xiǎosì)



方学东
(Fāng Xuédōng)



方太太
(Fāng Tàitai)



马太太

(Mǎ Tàitai)

A map of China and its surrounding regions. Russia is to the north, Myanmar to the southwest, and the South China Sea to the south. The map shows the borders of China, with internal provincial boundaries indicated by thin grey lines. Two cities are marked with black dots: Urumqi in the northwest and Lhasa in the southwest. A large white rectangular box with a black border is positioned in the center-left of the map, containing text about Shanghai. The text is in English and Chinese, describing Shanghai's historical and modern significance.

RUSSIA

• Urumqi

Locations

上海 (Shànghǎi)

Known as “The Paris of the East, the New York of the West”, early 1900’s Shanghai was a bustling center of commerce and western influence in pre-modern China. Today it is the center of business in modern day China.

• Lhasa

MYANMAR



Story 1

书

One

一本书

“欢欢，这本书是你的吗？”小天问。

小天是小明的哥哥¹。小天、小明和欢欢是朋友²，有时候³会一起⁴去上学⁵。

欢欢说：“不是我的书，是我朋友²的。我昨天去他家⁶，看到⁷了这本书。

1 哥哥 (gēge) *n.* older brother

2 朋友 (péngyou) *n.* friend

3 有时候 (yǒu shíhòu) *phrase* sometimes

4 一起 (yìqǐ) *adv.* together

5 上学 (shàngxué) *vt.* to start school, to go to school

6 家 (jiā) *n.* home

7 看到 (kàndào) *vt.* to see

我朋友说我可以看几天。”
2

小天看了看书的名字, 说: “我没听
8

说过这本书。是谁写的?”
9

小明说: “是一个很有名的外国人
10

写的, 很好看。”
11

听到小天和欢欢说话, 大头走了过
12 13

来说: “什么书这么好看? 拿来给我看
14 15 11 16

看!”
17

“不。” 欢欢马上走开了。
18

8 名字 (míngzì) *n.* name

9 听说 (tīngshuō) *v.* to hear tell, to hear said (that)

10 有名的 (yǒumíng de) *adj.* famous

11 好看 (hǎokàn) *adj.* good-looking

12 听到 (tīngdào) *vc.* to hear

13 说话 (shuōhuà) *vo.* to speak (words), to talk

14 走了过来 (zǒu le guòlái) *phrase* walked over

15 这么 (zhème) *adv.* so...

16 拿来 (nálái) *vc.* to fetch

17 看看 (kànkàn) *v.* to take a look

18 走开 (zǒukāi) *vc.* to go away



“你太小气了!” 大头 天天对欢欢很

不好。

“这是什么书? 我要看一下!” 大头

说。

19 小气 (xiǎoqì) *adj.* stingy, petty

20 天天 (tiāntiān) *adv.* every day

21 一下 (yíxià) *adv.* briefly, for a second

“不，你不要过来，你不要过来。我
要叫老师了！”欢欢生气地大叫。

“那你去叫，我看老师能做什么。
你去叫！”大头笑了。大头的爸爸也
是这里的老师。

欢欢不说话，生气地看大头。

“你小心一点，谁知道这本书明天
会在谁手上。”大头说。

22 过来 (guòlái) *vc.* to come over

23 叫 (jiào) *v.* to call, to be called

24 生气地 (shēngqì de) *phrase* angrily

25 大叫 (dà jiào) *v.* to call out loudly

26 笑 (xiào) *v.* to laugh, to smile

27 小心一点 (xiǎoxīn yīdiǎn) *phrase* to be (more) careful

28 手上 (shǒushang) *phrase* in one's hand(s)

Two

书不见了

第二天, 欢欢的书 不见了。

29

30

“谁 拿了我的书? 你 看见我的书了

31

32

吗?” 他问每一个学生。

“怎么了, 欢欢, 是什么书?” 小明

33

问。

“是我 朋友的书, 我明天要给他的

2

29 第二天 (dì-èr tiān) *phrase* the next day, the second day

30 不见了 (bùjiàn le) *phrase* disappeared

31 拿 (ná) *v.* to get, to hold

32 看见 (kànjian) *vc.* to see

33 怎么了 (zěnmē le) *phrase* what happened, what's the matter

……要是他知道书不见了，会很生气的。”

“今天你看到你的书了吗？”小明问。

“对，今天早上我还看到这本书……小明，大头昨天要看我的书，我没给他。他说了很多不好听的话，他还说，要我小心一点。”欢欢生气地说。

小明想了想，问：“你觉得是大头

34 要是 (yàoshi) *conj.* if

35 生气 (shēngqì) *vo., adj.* to get angry; angry

36 早上 (zǎoshang) *m.* morning

37 还 (hái) *adv.* still

38 不好听 (bù hǎotīng) *phrase* unpleasant-sounding

39 想了想 (xiǎng le xiǎng) *phrase* thought about it for a second



拿的?”

31

“不是他，会是谁？我要去跟老师说！”欢欢说。

“不要去，欢欢。”小明说。

“我知道是他！是他拿了我的书！”

31

欢欢说。

“欢欢，我知道大头对你很不好，你
很不开心。可是，你不能说书是大头
拿的，跟老师说了也没有用。”

“那，你说怎么办？”

“他在外面，我去问问他。”小明
走了出去。

40 不开心 (bù kāixīn) phrase not happy, to be unhappy

41 可是 (kěshì) conj. but

42 没有用 (méiyǒu yòng) phrase to be of no use

43 怎么办 (zěnmē bàn) phrase what is one to do

44 外面 (wàimian) n. outside

Three

大头拿的？

Four

是他

Story 2

火

Five

起火了

Six

是不是马太太？

Seven

又起火了

Eight

点火的人

Story 3

花

Nine

谁送的花？



有办法了

Eleven

打起来了！

Twelve

他说了

Thirteen

知道了



Key Words 关键词 (Guānjiàncí)

1. 哥哥 gēge *n.* older brother
2. 朋友 péngyou *n.* friend
3. 有时候 yǒu shíhou *phrase* sometimes
4. 一起 yìqǐ *adv.* together
5. 上学 shàngxué *vo.* to start school, to go to school
6. 家 jiā *n.* home
7. 看到 kàndào *vc.* to see
8. 名字 míngzi *n.* name
9. 听说 tīngshuō *v.* to hear tell, to hear said (that)
10. 有名的 yǒumíng de *adj.* famous
11. 好看 hǎokàn *adj.* good-looking
12. 听到 tīngdào *vc.* to hear
13. 说话 shuōhuà *vo.* to speak (words), to talk
14. 走了过来 zǒu le guòlai *phrase* walked over
15. 这么 zhème *adv.* so...
16. 拿来 ná lái *vc.* to fetch
17. 看看 kànkàn *v.* to take a look
18. 走开 zǒu kāi *vc.* to go away
19. 小气 xiǎoqì *adj.* stingy, petty
20. 天天 tiāntiān *adv.* every day
21. 一下 yíxià *adv.* briefly, for a second
22. 过来 guòlai *vc.* to come over
23. 叫 jiào *v.* to call, to be called
24. 生气地 shēngqì de *phrase* angrily
25. 大叫 dà jiào *v.* to call out loudly
26. 笑 xiào *v.* to laugh, to smile

27. 小心一点 xiǎoxīn yīdiǎn *phrase* to be (more) careful
28. 手上 shǒushang *phrase* in one' s hand(s)
29. 第二天 dì-èr tiān *phrase* the next day, the second day
30. 不见了 bùjiàn le *phrase* disappeared
31. 拿 ná *v.* to get, to hold
32. 看见 kànjian *vc.* to see
33. 怎么了 zěnmē le *phrase* what happened, what' s the matter
34. 要是 yàoshi *conj.* if
35. 生气 shēngqì *vo., adj.* to get angry; angry
36. 早上 zǎoshang *tn.* morning
37. 还 hái *adv.* still
38. 不好听 bù hǎotīng *phrase* unpleasant-sounding
39. 想了想 xiǎng le xiǎng *phrase* thought about it for a second
40. 不开心 bù kāixīn *phrase* not happy, to be unhappy
41. 可是 kěshì *conj.* but
42. 没有用 méiyǒu yòng *phrase* to be of no use
43. 怎么办 zěnmē bàn *phrase* what is one to do
44. 外面 wàimian *n.* outside
45. 说对了 shuō duì le *phrase* to get it right
46. 说完 shuō wán *vc.* to finish speaking
47. 走过来 zǒu guòlai *vc.* to walk over
48. 出来 chūlai *vc.* to come out
49. 听 tīng *v.* to listen (to)
50. 有一点 yǒu yīdiǎn *phrase* to be a little (too)
51. 一会儿 yīhuìr *tn.* a little while
52. 大家 dàjiā *n.* everyone
53. 这样 zhèyàng *pr.* like this
54. 那么 nàme *adv.* so...
55. 不可能 bù kěnéng *phrase* impossible (to)
56. 再 zài *adv.* again (in the future)
57. 又 yòu *adv.* again, and also
58. 的时候 de shíhou *phrase* when...
59. 办法 bànfǎ *n.* way (of doing), solution
60. 本子 běnzi *n.* notebook
61. 还是 háishi *conj., adv.* still
62. 多好 duō hǎo *phrase* so great

63. 钱 qián *n.* money
64. 以后 yǐhòu *adv.* after; later, in the future
65. 做饭 zuò fàn *vo.* to cook a meal
66. 地方 dìfāng *n.* place
67. 几家人 jǐ jiā rén *phrase* several families (of people)
68. 太太 tàitai *n.* wife, lady, Mrs.
69. 一家人 yī jiā rén *phrase* the whole family
70. 儿子 érzi *n.* son
71. 起来 qǐlai *vc.* to get up; upward
72. 门边 mén biān *phrase* by the door
73. 不好了 bù hǎo le *phrase* (this is) not good!
74. 起火 qǐhuǒ *vo.* to catch fire/to cook/to get angry
75. 走出来 zǒu chūlai *vc.* to walk out (from)
76. 东西 dōngxi *n.* thing(s), stuff
77. 进去 jìnqu *vc.* to go in
78. 一下子 yíxiàzi *adv.* all of a sudden; all at once
79. 开门 kāimén *vo.* to open the door
80. 还好 hái hǎo *phrase* not bad; tolerable; fortunately
81. 怎么会 zěnmé huì *phrase* how could
82. 点火 diǎnhuǒ *vo.* to light a fire
83. 星期 xīngqī *n.* week
84. 拿进去 ná jìnqu *vc.* to take in(side)
85. 老公 lǎogōng *n.* husband
86. 那天 nà tiān *tn.* that day
87. 一边 yíbiān *n.* one side
88. 怎么 zěnmé *adv.* how
89. 这时候 zhè shíhou *phrase* at this time
90. 看起来 kàn qǐlai *vc.* to look...
91. 星期六 Xīngqīliù *tn.* Saturday
92. 出门 chūmén *vo.* to go out the door, to go outside
93. 家里人 jiālǐ rén *n.* family members
94. 开心 kāixīn *adj.* happy
95. 手里 shǒu lǐ *phrase* in one's hand
96. 可能 kěnéng *adv.; aux* maybe, possibly; possible
97. 玩火 wán huǒ *vo.* to play with fire
98. 小心地 xiǎoxīn de *phrase* carefully

99. 好玩 hǎowán *adj.* fun
100. 不用谢 bùyòng xiè *phrase* You're welcome (lit. "no need to thank")
101. 中饭 zhōngfàn *n.* lunch
102. 上面 shàngmian *n.* on, on top, above
103. 喜欢 xǐhuan *v.* to like
104. 怕 pà *v.* to be afraid (of)
105. 过去 guòqu *vc.* to go over
106. 早起 zǎoqǐ *phrase* to get up early
107. 一次 yíci *phrase* one time
108. 第一天 dì-yī tiān *phrase* the first day
109. 听起来 tīng qǐlai *vc.* to sound...
110. 星期一 Xīngqīyī *tn.* Monday
111. 男朋友 nán péngyou *n.* boyfriend
112. 女朋友 nǚ péngyou *n.* girlfriend
113. 上上个 shàng-shàng ge *phrase* the one before last
114. 对不起 duìbuqǐ *phrase* I'm sorry

Part of Speech Key

<i>adj.</i> Adjective	<i>prep.</i> Preposition
<i>adv.</i> Adverb	<i>pr.</i> Pronoun
<i>aux.</i> Auxiliary Verb	<i>pn.</i> Proper noun
<i>conj.</i> Conjunction	<i>tn.</i> Time Noun
<i>cov.</i> Coverb	<i>v.</i> Verb
<i>mw.</i> Measure word	<i>vc.</i> Verb plus complement
<i>n.</i> Noun	<i>vo.</i> Verb plus object
<i>on.</i> Onomatopoeia	
<i>part.</i> Particle	



Grammar Points

For learners new to reading Chinese, an understanding of grammar points can be extremely helpful for learners and teachers. The following is a list of the most challenging grammar points used in this graded reader.

These grammar points correspond to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level A2 or above. The full list with explanations and examples of each grammar point can be found on the Chinese Grammar Wiki, the definitive source of information on Chinese grammar online.

ENGLISH	CHINESE
CHAPTER 1	
Tag questions with “ma”	……是吗 / 对吗 / 好吗?
The “shi... de” construction for indicating purpose	是……的
Expressing “will” with “hui”	会 + Verb
Expressing location with “zai... shang / xia / li”	在 + Place + 上 / 下 / 里 / 旁边
Expressing “excessively” with “tai”	太 + Adj. + 了
Expressing “then...” with “name”	那么……
Expressing “be going to” with “yao”	Subj. + 要 + Verb (+ 了)
Expressing experiences with “guo”	Verb + 过
Verbing briefly with “yixia”	Verb + 一下
Reduplication of verbs	Verb + Verb
Expressing ability or possibility with “neng”	能 + Verb

Verbs preceded by “gei”	Subj. + 给 + Target + Verb + Obj.
Reduplication of measure words	MW + MW
Expressing “every” with “mei”	每 + Measure Word (+ Noun)

CHAPTER 2

Expressing “would like to” with “xiang”	想 + Verb
Asking why with “zenme”	怎么……?
Ordinal numbers with “di”	第 + Number (+ Measure Word)
Placement of question words	什么 / 什么时候 / 谁 / 哪儿 / 为什么 / 怎么
Expressing “originally” with “benlai”	本来……
Expressing “if…then…” with “yaoshi”	要是……, 就……
The “also” adverb “ye”	也 + Verb / Adj.
Continuation with “hai”	Subj. + 还 + Verb Phrase / Adj.
Expressing “with” with “gen”	跟……+ Verb

CHAPTER 3

Using “de” (modal particle)	……的
Expressing permission with “keyi”	可以 + Verb
Expressing “mistakenly think that” with “yiwei”	Subj. + 以为……
Expressing “everything” with “shenme dou”	什么 + 都 / 也……
Using “ji” to mean “several”	几 + Measure Word + Noun
Expressing “again” in the future with “zai”	再 + Verb
Expressing “when” with “de shihou”	……的时候

CHAPTER 4

Expressing “only” with “zhi”	只 + Verb
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CHAPTER 5

Expressing “together” with “yiqi”	一起 + Verb
After a specific time with “yihou”	Time / Verb + 以后
Two words for “but”	……, 可是 / 但是……
Indicating a number in excess	Number + 多
Expressing “all at once” with “yixiazi”	Subj. + 一下子 + Verb + 了

CHAPTER 6

Asking why with “zenme”	怎么……?
Using “dui” with verbs	Subj. + 对 + Person + Verb

CHAPTER 7

Expressing “again” in the past with “you”	又 + Verb + 了
Appearance with “kanqilai”	看起来……

CHAPTER 9

Approximating with sequential numbers	Number 1 + Number 2
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CHAPTER 10

Direction complement “-qilai”	Verb / Adj. + 起来
Conceding with “ba”	……吧

CHAPTER 13

Expressing “not very” with “bu tai”	不太 + Adj.
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About Mandarin Companion

Mandarin Companion was started by Jared Turner and John Pasden, who met one fateful day on a bus in Shanghai when the only remaining seats forced them to sit next to each other.

John majored in Japanese in college in the US and later learned Mandarin before moving to China, where he was admitted into an all-Chinese masters program in applied linguistics at East China Normal University in Shanghai. John lives in Shanghai with his wife and children. John is the editor-in-chief at Mandarin Companion and ensures each story is written at the appropriate level.

Jared decided to move to China with his young family in search of career opportunities, despite having no Chinese language skills. When he learned about Extensive Reading and started using graded readers, his language skills exploded. In 3 months, he had read 10 graded readers and quickly became conversational in Chinese. Jared lives in the US with his wife and children. Jared runs the business operations and focuses on bringing stories to life.

John and Jared work with Chinese learners and teachers all over the world. They host a podcast, You Can Learn Chinese, where they discuss the struggles and joys of learning to speak the language. They are active on social media, where they share memes and stories about learning Chinese.

You can connect with them through the website

www.mandarincompanion.com



Other Stories from Mandarin Companion

Breakthrough Readers: 150 Characters

The Misadventures of Zhou

Haisheng

《周海生》

by John Pasden, Jared Turner

My Teacher Is a Martian

《我的老师是火星人》

by John Pasden, Jared Turner

In Search of Hua Ma

《花马》

by John Pasden, Jared Turner

Just Friends?

《我们是朋友吗?》

by John Pasden, Jared Turner

Level 1 Readers: 300 Characters

The Secret Garden

《秘密花园》

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

The Sixty Year Dream

《六十年的梦》

by Washington Irving

The Monkey's Paw

《猴爪》

by W. W. Jacobs

The Country of the Blind

《盲人国》

by H. G. Wells

Sherlock Holmes and the Case of

the Curly-Haired Company

《卷发公司的案子》

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Prince and the Pauper

《王子和穷孩子》

by Mark Twain

Emma

《安末》

by Jane Austen

The Ransom of Red Chief

《红猴的价格》

by O. Henry

Level 2 Readers: 450 Characters

Great Expectations: Part 1

《美好的前途（上）》

by Charles Dickens

Great Expectations: Part 2

《美好的前途（下）》

by Charles Dickens

Journey to the Center of the Earth

《地心游记》

by Jules Verne

Jekyll and Hyde

《江可和黑德》

by Robert Louis Stevenson

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a growing library of graded readers
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