

Reader Level
Breakthrough

Unique Characters
150

我们是朋友吗？

Wǒmen Shì Péngyou ma?

Just Friends?

John Pasden and Jared Turner



**Mandarin
Companion**

Chinese Graded Readers

Published by Mind Spark Press LLC Shanghai, China

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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

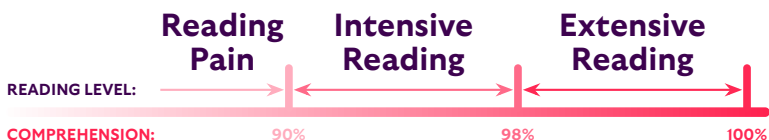
What is Extensive Reading?

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

Many of the most basic characters and words that beginning learners encounter involve students and school. This served as the beginning of the idea for a simple love triangle story. While we weren't able to include all of the humorous scenes we came up with, this story will still have you turning the pages to find out what happens next. Set within a new corner of the “Mandarin Companion Universe,” these are new characters, but keep your eyes open for some familiar faces in higher level books in the series.

Finally, a note about the title. The English title *Just Friends?* is not an exact translation of the Chinese title 我们是朋友吗? (Wǒmen Shì Péngyou ma?), and yet each title is relevant to the story in its own way. We don't want to give any spoilers, but after finishing the story, you should see how the two titles work together to frame the 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.

钱大朋 (Qián Dàpéng) – Qian Dapeng

谢文东 (Xiè Wéndōng) – Xie Wendong

周子心 (Zhōu Zǐxīn) – Zhou Zixin

谢妈妈 (Xiè Māma) – Mrs. Xie

谢爸爸 (Xiè Bàba) – Mr. Xie

Cast of Characters



钱大朋
(Qián Dàpéng)



谢文东
(Xiè Wéndōng)



周子心

(Zhōu Zǐxīn)



谢妈妈

(Xiè Māma)



谢爸爸

(Xiè Bàba)

A map of China is shown in the background, with Russia to the north and Myanmar to the south. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the map, containing text about university locations. The box has a black border. The text inside the box is in Chinese and English. The background map shows the outline of China, with Russia to the north and Myanmar to the south. Two cities are marked with black dots and labeled: Urumqi and Lhasa. The sea is shown in blue at the bottom.

Locations

中山大学 (Zhōngshān Dàxué)

Located in Guangzhou, Zhongshan University was founded in 1924 by Sun Yat-sen (孙中山), a revolutionary and the founder of the Republic of China. In English, it is known as Sun Yat-sen University.

广州 (Guǎngzhōu)

Guangzhou is the largest city in southern China and a hub of Cantonese culture. It is the center of the most populous built-up urban area in the world consisting of nine cities and two special administrative regions.



One

两个好朋友

钱大朋和谢文东都是中山大学的大
学生，今年是他们大学的第二年。他
们天天一起去吃饭，一起去看书，两
个人是很好的朋友。

谢文东的爸爸妈妈开饭店。谢文东
有时候会带钱大朋去饭店吃饭。谢文

- 1 大学生 (dàxuéshēng) *n.* university student
2 第二年 (dì-èr nián) *phrase* second year
3 天天 (tiāntiān) *adv.* every day
4 一起 (yìqǐ) *adv.* together
5 看书 (kànshū) *vo.* to read, to study

- 6 开饭店 (kāi fàndiàn) *vo.* to open a restaurant
7 有时候 (yǒu shíhòu) *phrase* sometimes
8 带 (dài) *v.* to take
9 饭店 (fàndiàn) *n.* restaurant

东的爸爸妈妈都见过钱大朋。钱大朋

10

有时候也会开车带谢文东回家。

7

11

8

12

钱大朋不喜欢吃大学的饭，天天

13

3

都出去吃。钱大朋的爸爸妈妈很有钱，

14

15

每个月都给儿子很多钱。

16

“大朋，你有车，天天开车来大学。

3

11

你很开心吧！”文东和大朋说。

17

“我一点也不开心！我从小到大都

18

17

19

跟我爸妈在一起，我做什么他们都要

20

10 见过 (jiàn guo) *phrase* have met before

11 开车 (kāichē) *vo.* to drive a car

12 回家 (huíjiā) *vo.* to go home

13 喜欢 (xǐhuan) *v.* to like

14 出去 (chūqu) *vc.* to go out

15 有钱 (yǒuqián) *vo.* to be rich

16 儿子 (érzi) *n.* son

17 开心 (kāixīn) *adj.* happy

18 一点也不 (yí diǎn yě bù) *phrase* not at all

19 从小到大 (cóng xiǎo dào dà) *phrase* from a young age until adulthood

20 在一起 (zài yìqǐ) *phrase* to be together



问。” 钱大朋 不开心地说，“我一点也

21

不喜欢 这样的家。”

18

13

22

23

“他们 关心你。那样不好吗？” 谢文

24

25

东问。

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

22 这样 (zhèyàng) *pr.* like this

23 家 (jiā) *n.* home, family

24 关心 (guānxīn) *v.* to be concerned for

25 那样 (nà-yàng) *adv.* like that

“我知道他们关心我。可是，有时候

‘太关心了’，我不知道怎么跟他们说。”

钱大朋说，“我回家的时候，我妈天天

问我有没有女朋友。”

“你怎么说？”

“我不知道怎么说。说有，我妈会马

上想和我的女朋友见面。说没有，我

妈会叫我去见一个女生，跟那个女

生去吃饭什么的。可是，我一点也

26 可是 (kěshì) *conj.* but

27 怎么 (zěnmě) *adv.* how

28 的时候 (de shíhòu) *phrase* when...

29 女朋友 (nǚpéngyǒu) *n.* girlfriend

30 马上 (mǎshàng) *adv.* right away

31 见面 (jiànmiàn) *v.* to meet

32 叫 (jiào) *v.* to be called, to call; to tell
(someone to do something)

33 女生 (nǚshēng) *n.* girl, female student

34 点 (diǎn) *v.* to order (food)

不喜欢那个女生。我也不想和她见
面。”

“那，你妈知不知道你不喜欢那
个女生？”

“她知道，我说过很多次，可是，那
个女生是一个大学生，她是我爸的一
个好朋友的女儿。我爸很喜欢。我一
点也不喜欢。”

谢文东听了笑笑，不知道说什么。

35 次 (cì) *mv.* time(s)

36 听 (tīng) *v.* to listen (to)

37 笑 (xiào) *v.* to laugh, to smile

Two

好看的女生

“大朋，我们大学那么多好看的女
生，你没有喜欢的吗？”吃饭的时候，
谢文东问。

大朋看看文东，笑了笑：“你看到
 什么了？”

“这几天，我看你都在看周子心。”

38 那么 (nàme) *adv.* so...

39 好看 (hǎokàn) *adj.* good-looking

40 看看 (kànkàn) *v.* to take a look

41 看到 (kàndào) *vc.* to see

42 几天 (jǐ tiān) *phrase* several days

上次，我跟你说话你都没有听见。你是不是喜欢她？”

“我喜欢她，那又怎么样？”钱大朋

笑了。

文东看看大朋，没有笑：“我也喜欢她。”

大朋一下子不笑了，也不吃了：“不是吧？从什么时候……我怎么一点也不知道？”

43 上次 (shàng cì) *phrase* last time

44 说话 (shuō huà) *vt.* to speak (words), to talk

45 听见 (tīng jiàn) *vt.* to hear

46 那又怎么样 (nà yòu zěnmeyàng) *phrase* so what?

47 一下子 (yíxiàzǐ) *adv.* all of a sudden; all at once

48 时候 (shíhou) *n.* when



“我和她都喜欢看书，我在书店见
 过她很多次。她是一个好女生，也很好
 看……谁会不喜欢？”

“那，你跟她说了吗？”大朋小心地
 问。

“没有，她不知道我喜欢她……”文

13

东不说了。

“我也没跟她说。” 大朋说。

“大朋，我们是不是好朋友？” 谢文

东问。

“是，那又怎么样？ 周子心不是你

46

的女朋友，对不对？” 大朋小心地问。

29

50

文东生气地看大朋：“你怎么能这

51

27

样说？”

22

大朋知道文东生气了。大朋跟他说：

52

51 生气地 (shēngqì de) phrase angrily

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

“好了好了，我知道你要说什么。我们是好朋友，我是不会跟你喜欢的女生一起出去的。”

文东笑了：“好！我也是不会跟她一起出去的！”



53 好了好了 (hǎole hǎole) phrase all right, all right

Three

去书店

Four**很生气**

Five

是不是好朋友？



去饭店

Seven

吃饭

Eight

女朋友？

Nine

不是女朋友？

Ten

没有男朋友

Eleven

有话要说

Twelve

是好朋友？



Key Words 关键词 (Guānjiàncí)

1. 大学生 dàxuéshēng *n.* university student
2. 第二年 dì-èr nián *phrase* second year
3. 天天 tiāntiān *adv.* every day
4. 一起 yìqǐ *adv.* together
5. 看书 kànshū *vo.* to read, to study
6. 开饭店 kāi fàndiàn *vo.* to open a restaurant
7. 有时候 yǒu shíhòu *phrase* sometimes
8. 带 dài *v.* to take
9. 饭店 fàndiàn *n.* restaurant
10. 见过 jiàn guo *phrase* have met before
11. 开车 kāichē *vo.* to drive a car
12. 回家 huíjiā *vo.* to go home
13. 喜欢 xǐhuan *v.* to like
14. 出去 chūqu *vc.* to go out
15. 有钱 yǒuqián *vo.* to be rich
16. 儿子 érzi *n.* son
17. 开心 kāixīn *adj.* happy
18. 一点也不 yí diǎn yě bù *phrase* not at all
19. 从小到大 cóng xiǎo dào dà *phrase* from a young age until adulthood
20. 在一起 zài yìqǐ *phrase* to be together
21. 不开心 bù kāixīn *phrase* not happy, to be unhappy
22. 这样 zhèyàng *pr.* like this
23. 家 jiā *n.* home, family
24. 关心 guānxīn *v.* to be concerned for
25. 那样 nà-yàng *adv.* like that

26. 可是 kěshì *conj.* but
27. 怎么 zěnmě *adv.* how
28. 的时候 de shíhou *phrase* when...
29. 女朋友 nǚpéngyou *n.* girlfriend
30. 马上 mǎshàng *adv.* right away
31. 见面 jiànmiàn *vo.* to meet
32. 叫 jiào *v.* to be called, to call; to tell (someone to do something)
33. 女生 nǚshēng *n.* girl, female student
34. 点 diǎn *v.* to order (food)
35. 次 cì *mv.* time(s)
36. 听 tīng *v.* to listen (to)
37. 笑 xiào *v.* to laugh, to smile
38. 那么 nàme *adv.* so...
39. 好看 hǎokàn *adj.* good-looking
40. 看看 kànkàn *v.* to take a look
41. 看到 kàndào *vc.* to see
42. 几天 jǐ tiān *phrase* several days
43. 上次 shàng cì *phrase* last time
44. 说话 shuōhuà *vo.* to speak (words), to talk
45. 听见 tīngjiàn *vc.* to hear
46. 那又怎么样 nà yòu zěnmeyàng *phrase* so what?
47. 一下子 yíxiàzi *adv.* all of a sudden; all at once
48. 时候 shíhou *n.* when
49. 书店 shūdiàn *n.* bookstore
50. 小心地 xiǎoxīn de *phrase* carefully
51. 生气地 shēngqì de *phrase* angrily
52. 生气 shēngqì *vo., adj.* to get angry; angry
53. 好了好了 hǎole hǎole *phrase* all right, all right
54. 星期四 Xīngqīsi *tn.* Thursday
55. 晚上 wǎnshang *tn.* evening
56. 男生 nánshēng *n.* boy, male student
57. 大家 dàijiā *n.* everyone
58. 一下 yíxià *adv.* briefly, for a second
59. 这时候 zhè shíhou *phrase* at this time
60. 这么 zhème *adv.* so...

61. 晚 wǎn *adj.* late
62. 一个人 yī gè rén *phrase* alone
63. 回来 huílai *vc.* to come back
64. 不行 bù xíng *phrase* not OK
65. 外面 wàimian *n.* outside
66. 还 hái *adv.* still
67. 大叫 dà jiào *v.* to call out loudly
68. 听到 tīngdào *vc.* to hear
69. 一会儿 yíhuìr *tn.* a little while
70. 回去 huíqu *vc.* to go back
71. 想了想 xiǎng le xiǎng *phrase* thought about it for a second
72. 东西 dōngxi *n.* thing(s), stuff
73. 说完 shuō wán *vc.* to finish speaking
74. 小吃店 xiǎochī diàn *n.* snack shop
75. 吃的 chī de *n.* food
76. 小吃 xiǎochī *n.* snack
77. 好吃 hǎochī *adj.* tasty
78. 过来 guòlai *vc.* to come over
79. 怎么会 zěnmē huì *phrase* how could
80. 多长时间 duō cháng shíjiān *phrase* how long (of a time)
81. 男朋友 nán péngyou *n.* boyfriend
82. 要是 yàoshi *conj.* if
83. 又 yòu *adv.* again
84. 第二天 dì-èr tiān *phrase* the next day
85. 还是 hái shì *conj., adv.* still; had better
86. 昨天 zuótiān *tn.* yesterday
87. 怎么了 zěnmē le *phrase* what happened, what's the matter
88. 对不起 duìbuqǐ *phrase* I'm sorry
89. 有一点 yǒu yīdiǎn *phrase* to be a little (too)
90. 时间 shíjiān *n.* time
91. 上个月 shàng ge yuè *tn.* last month
92. 过去 guòqu *vc.* to go over
93. 行 xíng *adj.* all right
94. 再 zài *adv.* again (in the future)
95. 下次 xià cì *tn.* next time
96. 开心地 kāixīn de *phrase* happily

97. 看见 kànjian *vc.* to see
 98. 点菜 diǎncài *vo.* to order food
 99. 吃不完 chī bu wán *vc.* to be unable to finish eating
 100. 听说 tīngshuō *v.* to hear tell, to hear said (that)
 101. 第一次 dì-yī cì *phrase* first time
 102. 听起来 tīng qǐlai *vc.* to sound...
 103. 可能 kěnéng *adv.; aux* maybe, possibly; possible
 104. 看起来 kàn qǐlai *vc.* to look...
 105. 小心 xiǎoxīn *v.* to be careful
 106. 那天 nà tiān *tn.* that day
 107. 过几天 guò jǐ tiān *phrase* after a few days
 108. 星期天 Xīngqītiān *tn.* Sunday
 109. 还好 hái hǎo *phrase* not bad; tolerable; fortunately
 110. 都好了 dōu hǎo le *phrase* everything is fine
 111. 过了几天 guò le jǐ tiān *phrase* after a few days had passed
 112. 名字 míngzi *n.* name
 113. 下个月 xià ge yuè *tn.* next month
 114. 出国 chūguó *vo.* to leave the country

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	
The “all” adverb “dou”	都 + Verb / Adj.
Ordinal numbers with “di”	第 + Number (+ Measure Word)
Expressing “together” with “yiqi”	一起 + Verb
Expressing “and” with “he”	Noun 1 + 和 + Noun 2
Expressing “not at all” with “yidianr ye bu”	Subj. + 一点 + 也 / 都 + 不 + Adj.
Expressing “from…to…” with “cong…dao…”	从……到……
Expressing “with” with “gen”	跟……+ Verb
The “also” adverb “ye”	也 + Verb / Adj.
Expressing “excessively” with “tai”	太 + Adj. + 了
Expressing “when” with “de shihou”	……的时候
Affirmative-negative question	Verb + 不 + Verb / Adj. + 不 + Adj.

Expressing “will” with “hui”	会 + Verb
Expressing experiences with “guo”	Verb + 过
Reduplication of verbs	Verb + Verb
How to do something with “zenme”	怎么 + Verb ?

CHAPTER 2

Change of state with “le”	……了
Expressing “all at once” with “yixiazi”	Subj. + 一下子 + Verb + 了
Expressing existence in a place with “zai”	在 + Place
Expressing actions in progress with “zai”	(正) 在 + Verb
Expressing “then…” with “name”	那么……
Asking how something is with “zenmeyang”	……怎么样?
The “shi... de” construction for emphasizing details	是……的
Expressing ability or possibility with “neng”	能 + Verb
Expressing “be going to” with “yao”	Subj. + 要 + Verb (+ 了)
Emphasizing negation with “you”	又 + 不 / 没 + Verb

CHAPTER 3

Using the verb “qu”	去 + Place
Comparing “er” and “liang”	二 vs 两
A softer “but” with “buguo”	……, 不过……
Verbing briefly with “yixia”	Verb + 一下
Expressing “already” with “dou”	都 + Time + 了
Wanting to do something with “yao”	要 + Verb
Tag questions with “bu”	……是不是 / 对不对 / 好不好?

CHAPTER 4

Expressing permission with “keyi”	可以 + Verb
Expressing location with “zai... shang / xia / li”	在 + Place + 上 / 下 / 里 / 旁边
Expressing “everything” with “shenme dou”	什么 + 都 / 也……
Expressing “had better” with “haishi”	还是 + Verb

CHAPTER 5

Modifying nouns with adjective + “de”	Adj. + 的 + Noun
Direction complement	Verb (+ Direction) + 来 / 去
Asking why with “zenme”	怎么……?
Expressing “if...then…” with “yaoshi”	要是……, 就……
Expressing “then…” with “name”	那么……
Suggestions with “ba”	Command + 吧

CHAPTER 6

Continuation with “hai”	Subj. + 还 + Verb Phrase / Adj.
Expressing “a little too” with “you yidian”	有一点 + Adj.
Expressing “again” in the past with “you”	又 + Verb + 了
Expressing “again” in the future with “zai”	再 + Verb

CHAPTER 9

Using the verb “jiao”	叫 + Name
Direction complement “-qilai”	Verb / Adj. + 起来
Doing something more with “duo”	多 + Verb

CHAPTER 12

Questions with “ne”	……呢?
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Credits

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Editors : Ma Lihua, Li Jiong

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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



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Haisheng

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《小明》

by John Pasden, Jared Turner

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