# Preface

This completely revised and redesigned Character Workbook is meant to accompany the third edition of *Integrated Chinese (IC)*. It has been over ten years since the *IC* series came into existence in 1997. During these years, amid all the historical changes that took place in China and the rest of the world, the demand for Chinese language teaching/learning materials has grown dramatically. We are greatly encouraged by the fact that *IC* not only has been a widely used textbook at the college level all over the United States and beyond, but also has become increasingly popular for advanced language students in high schools.  Based on user feedback, we have made numerous changes so that the Character Workbook can become an even more useful tool for students of Chinese.

**Stressing the importance of learning a new character by its components**

Learning a new character becomes much easier if the student can identify its components. The student should learn how to write the 40 radicals at the beginning of the Character Workbook in the correct stroke order first, because these 40 radicals will appear repeatedly in other characters later. If a new character contains a component already familiar to the student, the stroke order of that component will not be introduced again. However, we will show the stroke order of all new components as they appear when we introduce new characters. For example, when we introduce the character 孩 (hái, child) in Lesson 2, we do not show the stroke order for the radical 子 (zǐ, son) because 子 already appeared in the radical section. Therefore, we only display the stroke order for the other component 亥 (hài, the last of the Twelve Earthly Branches). For the same reason, when 亥 appears in the new character 刻 (kè, quarter of an hour) in Lesson 3, its stroke order is not displayed. When the student learns a new character, he or she can easily tell if a component in the character has appeared in previous lessons. If the stroke order for that component is not displayed, it means that the component is not new. The student should try to recall where he or she has seen it before. By doing so, the student can connect new characters with old ones and build up a character bank. We believe that learning by association will help the student memorize characters better.

**Main features of the new Character Workbook**

a. Both traditional and simplified characters are introduced
If a character appears in both traditional and simplified form, we show both to accommodate different learner needs.

b. Pinyin and English definition are clearly noted
We have moved the pinyin and the English definition above each character for easy recognition and review.

c. Radicals are highlighted
The radical of each character is highlighted. Knowing what radical group a character belongs to is essential when looking up that character in a traditional dictionary where the characters are arranged according to their radicals. To a certain extent, radicals can also help the student decipher the meaning of a character. For example, characters containing the radical 貝/贝 (bèi, shell), such as 貴/贵 (guì, expensive), and 貨/货 (huò, merchandise), are often associated with money or value. The student can group the characters sharing the same radical together and learn them by association.

d. Stroke order is prominently displayed
Another feature that we think is important is the numbering of each stroke in the order of its appearance. Each number is marked at the beginning of that particular stroke. We firmly believe that it is essential to write a character in the correct stroke order, and to know where each stroke begins and ends. To display the stroke order more prominently, we have moved the step–by–step character writing demonstration next to the main characters.

e. A "training wheel" is provided
We also provide grids with fine shaded lines inside to help the student better envision and balance their characters when practicing.
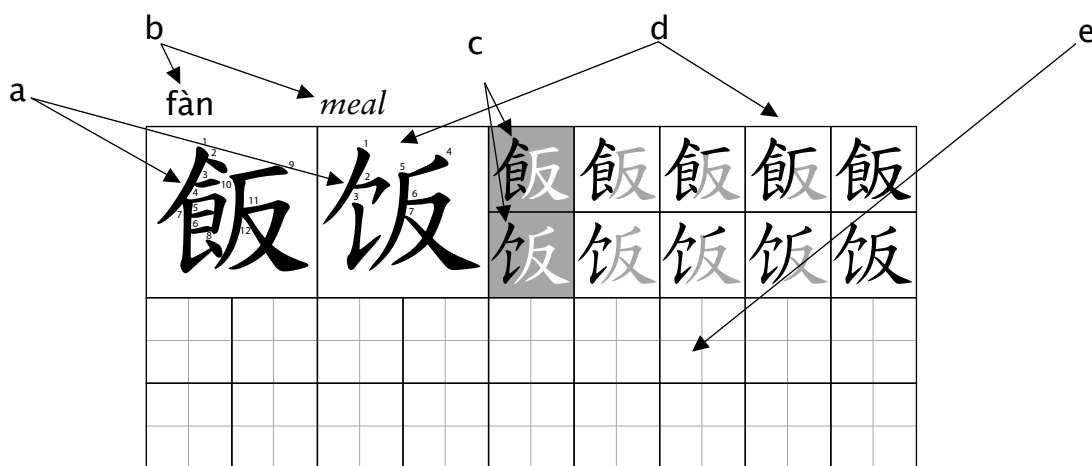


**Other changes in the new edition**

In order to focus on character recognition and acquisition, we decided not to include elements having to do with phonetic identification and phrase recognition.

To help the student look up characters more easily and to make the Character Workbook smaller and more portable, we decided to limit the indices to two, one arranged alphabetically by pinyin and the other by lesson. Additional appendices that are not directly linked to the practice of writing characters, such as the English–Chinese glossary, are available in the Textbook.

As in the textbook, low-frequency characters are indicated in gray in the Character Workbook.

The formation and radical of each character in this book are based on the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (現代漢語詞典/现代汉语词典) published by the Commercial Press (商務印書館/商务印书馆). A total of 201 radicals appear in that dictionary, and in some cases the same character is listed under more than one radical. For the characters in this book that fall in that category, we provide two radicals in order to facilitate students' dictionary searches. The two radicals are presented in order from top to bottom (e.g., 名: 夕, 口), left to right (e.g., 功：工, 力), and large to small (e.g., 章: 音, 立; 麻: 麻, 广). Also following the *Modern Chinese Dictionary*, we have made adjustments with regard to variant forms: For example, 黃, 望, 綫, 麼 and 別 are presented as standard rather than 黄, 望, 線, 麽, and 别 respectively. Students, however, should be allowed to write the characters in their variant forms.

The changes that we made in the new version reflect the collective wishes of the users. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who gave us feedback on how to improve the Character Workbook. We would like to acknowledge in particular Professor Hu Shuangbao of Beijing University and Professor Shi Dingguo of Beijing Language and Culture University, both of whom read the entire manuscript and offered invaluable comments and suggestions for revision. Ms. Laurel Damashek at Cheng & Tsui assisted throughout the production process.

We hope you find this new edition useful. We welcome your comments and feedback. Please report any typos or other errors to **editor@cheng-tsui.com.**