



# 我的老师是火星儿人

Wǒ de Lǎoshī Shì Huǒxīng rén

## My Teacher is a Martian

by Jared Turner and John Pasden

# **Mandarin Companion Graded Readers**

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**Breakthrough Level: 150 characters**

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Mind Spark Press LLC

SHANGHAI

# Mandarin Companion Graded Readers

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Mandarin Companion creates books you can read! This series offers Chinese learners enjoyable and interesting reading materials to accelerate language learning. Each book uses characters, words, and grammar that a learner is most likely to know at each level based on in-depth analysis of textbooks, education programs, and natural Chinese language. Every story is written in a style that is easy for a learner to understand and enjoyable to read.

## Mandarin Companion Breakthrough Level

The Breakthrough Level is intended for Chinese learners who have obtained a low elementary or novice level of Chinese. Most students will be able to approach this book after one year of traditional formal study, depending on the learner and program. In creating this story, we have carefully balanced the need for level-appropriate simplicity against the needs of the story's plot.

Writing our stories for beginner readers, we have paid close attention to both Chinese characters and vocabulary words. The Breakthrough Level is written using a core set of 150 characters, a subset of the 300 characters used in Mandarin Companion Level 1. This ensures that the vocabulary will be limited to simple, everyday words, composed of characters that the learner is most likely to know. Any new characters used outside of the 150 Breakthrough Level characters are exclusively borrowed from the Level 1 character set, meaning that with each new story, the reader is systematically building toward Level 1.

Key words are added gradually over the course of the story. A numbered footnote indicates the first time a new word or character is introduced and the corresponding [hyperlink](#) references the glossary with pinyin and an English definition. Each additional instance of a new word is indicated by a hyperlink. All proper nouns have been underlined to help the reader distinguish between names and words.

## **What level is right for me?**

If you are able to read this book with a high level of comprehension, then this book is likely at your level. It is ideal to have at most only one unknown word or character for every 40-50 words or characters that are read.

Once you are able to read fluidly and quickly without interruption you are ready for the next level. Even if you are able to understand all of the words in the book, we recommend that readers build fluidity and reading speed before moving to higher levels.

## How will this help my Chinese?

Reading extensively in a language you are learning is one of the most effective ways to build fluency. However, the key is to read at a high level of comprehension. Reading at the appropriate level in Chinese will increase the speed of character recognition, help acquire vocabulary faster, allow readers to naturally learn grammar, and train the brain to think in Chinese. It also makes learning Chinese more fun and enjoyable. Readers will experience the sense of accomplishment and confidence that only comes from reading entire books in Chinese.

For more information, please see [Extensive Reading and Graded Readers](#)

# About Mandarin Companion

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Mandarin Companion was started by Jared Turner and John Pasden who met one **fateful day** on a bus in Shanghai when the only remaining seat left them sitting next to each other. A year later, Jared had greatly improved his Chinese using extensive reading but was frustrated at the lack of suitable reading materials. He approached John with the prospect of creating their own series. Having worked in Chinese education for nearly a decade, John was intrigued with the idea and thus began the Mandarin Companion series.

John majored in Japanese in college, but started learning Mandarin and later moved to China where his learning accelerated. After developing language proficiency, he was admitted into an all-Chinese masters program in applied linguistics at East China Normal University in Shanghai. Throughout his learning process, John developed an open mind to different learning styles and a tendency to challenge conventional wisdom in the field of teaching Chinese. He has since worked at ChinesePod as academic director and host, and opened his own consultancy, AllSet Learning, in Shanghai to help individuals acquire Chinese language proficiency. He lives in Shanghai with his wife and children.

After graduate school and with no Chinese language skills, Jared decided to move to China with his young family in search of career opportunities. Later while working on an investment project, Jared learned about extensive reading and decided that if it was as effective as it claimed to be, it could help him learn Chinese. In three months, he read 10 Chinese graded readers and his language ability **quickly improved** from speaking words and phrases to a conversational level. Jared has an MBA from Purdue University and a bachelor in Economics from the University of Utah. He lives in Shanghai with his wife and children.



# Credits

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Story Authors: John Pasden, Jared Turner

Editor-in-Chief: John Pasden

Content Editor: Chen Shishuang

Editors: Li Jiong, Ma Lihua

Illustrator: Hu Sheng

Producer: Jared Turner

# Acknowledgements

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# Story Adaption Notes

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Any learner that has managed to learn 150 Chinese characters knows it is not an easy task, and the prospect of reading a real text in Chinese seems discouragingly far-off. Typically textbook dialogs are the only reading material available for years on end. That's why being able to read an actual story with only 150 Chinese characters is a very big deal, and a huge help to the fluency development of early-stage learners.

The stories told at this 150-character Breakthrough Level are special, however. Nouns, verbs and adjectives at this level are in short supply, and the stories revolve around the limited vocabulary by necessity. This is why Breakthrough Level stories are not adaptations of western classics. They are original stories co-written by John Pasden and Jared Turner, specifically designed to be engaging to readers despite the limitations.

When John and Jared were generating story ideas at the Breakthrough Level, the character for "fire," 火 (huǒ), and for "star," 星 (xīng), were on a sheet of possible characters to be used. Together, these characters form the Chinese word for Mars: 火星 (Huǒxīng), which ignited an ambition to create a sci-fi story using the Chinese name of the fourth planet in our solar system. Jared recalled reading a story called "My Teacher is an Alien" in his youth, which provided the inspiration for a story about two Chinese elementary school students who suspect their teacher is, in fact, from Mars. From this spark of an idea, the Mandarin Companion story *My Teacher is a Martian* was born. For those who can read this book at an enjoyable pace, you are already well on your way towards progressing to the Level 1 stories.

P.S. There are two "Mandarin Companion Universe" and two sci-fi easter eggs hidden in the illustrations of this book. Can you find them?

# Cast of Characters

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谢心月  
(Xiè Xīnyuè)



马天明  
(Mǎ Tiānmíng)



车老师  
(Chē Lǎoshī)



方老师  
(Fāng Lǎoshī)



水老师  
(Shuǐ Lǎoshī)

# Locations

山东 (Shāndōng) Although not explicitly stated, this story takes place in a smallish city in China's Shandong Province.



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# 外星人

谢心月今年十岁<sup>[1]</sup>，她是一个小学生<sup>[2]</sup>。她有一个新<sup>[3]</sup>朋友，叫<sup>[4]</sup>“马天明”，马天明今年也是十岁。他们每天都一起<sup>[5]</sup>去上学<sup>[6]</sup>。

马天明的爸爸今年已经<sup>[7]</sup>四十岁了，他写过很多书，他的新书里有外星人<sup>[8]</sup>，马天明和谢心月都会看他写的书。有时候<sup>[9]</sup>，两个爸爸会和他們一起去山上<sup>[10]</sup>看星星<sup>[11]</sup>。



“有很多星星，可是<sup>[12]</sup>星星太小了，星星上有外星人吗？”马天明问谢心月。

“我也不知道。我很想见见外星人！”谢心月说。

“你不怕<sup>[13]</sup>外星人吗？”马天明问。

“我不怕，你呢？”谢心月说。

马天明说：“我也不怕。我爸爸说，外星人在天上<sup>[14]</sup>可以看见<sup>[15]</sup>我们，可是，我们不能看见他们。”

“我看了你爸爸写的新书，书里说了外星人的样子。他是不是已经见过<sup>[16]</sup>外星人了？”谢心月问。

马天明笑<sup>[17]</sup>了：“他没有见过外星人。”

“你说，外星人会说中文吗？”谢心月问。  
“要是<sup>[18]</sup>他们不会说中文，我们怎么<sup>[19]</sup>和他们说话<sup>[20]</sup>？”

马天明想了想<sup>[21]</sup>说：“我不知道，可能<sup>[22]</sup>他们可以。”

“要是你见了一个会说中文的外星人，你会跟他说什么？”谢心月又<sup>[23]</sup>问。

马天明有很多话想问外星人，说：“我……我要问他们，他们的家<sup>[24]</sup>在什么地方<sup>[25]</sup>，他们那里和我们这里有什么不一样<sup>[26]</sup>，他们为什么要来我们这里……”

马爸爸听<sup>[27]</sup>完以后<sup>[28]</sup>就<sup>[29]</sup>笑了。



“明天星期一<sup>[30]</sup>，又要上学了。不知道外星人小朋友<sup>[31]</sup>是不是也都要上学？”谢心月说。

“见到外星人的时候<sup>[32]</sup>，你就问他们吧。”马爸爸笑了笑。



# 车老师

第二天<sup>[33]</sup>，来了一个小学<sup>[34]</sup>老师，是男老师。“大家<sup>[35]</sup>好，我是你们的新老师，你们可以叫我车老师，我今年三十岁。”

“车？我没有听过。”谢心月说。

“我也没听过。”马天明说，“车老师，你是哪里人？”

“我去过很多地方，你问我是哪里人，我不知道怎么说。”

老师的话有一点<sup>[36]</sup>好笑<sup>[37]</sup>，学生们都笑了。



车老师看过很多星星和火星<sup>[38]</sup>的书，每次<sup>[39]</sup>说到火星，他就能说很多：知道火星在哪里，火星上没有水，也没有人……听车老师说火星的时候，马天明和谢心月都很开心<sup>[40]</sup>。

“老师，你的家不在火星上，怎么知道这么多？”谢心月问。<sup>[41]</sup>

“我爸爸的新书里也没写过这么多。”马天明也说。



车老师没说话，对他们笑笑。

有一天<sup>[42]</sup>，学生和老师已经都走了，马天明和谢心月回来<sup>[43]</sup>拿<sup>[44]</sup>东西<sup>[45]</sup>。到门边<sup>[46]</sup>的时候，他们看到<sup>[47]</sup>车老师在里面<sup>[48]</sup>。他一边<sup>[49]</sup>用左手写字，一边用右手写字，一边看书<sup>[50]</sup>！



“快看，车老师！怎么可能……”马天明对谢心月说。

谢心月说：“我看到了，这不是我第一次<sup>[51]</sup>看到他这样<sup>[52]</sup>了。”

马天明又说：“车老师是……是个什么人？”

“他会听到<sup>[53]</sup>的！我们回家<sup>[54]</sup>说吧。”谢心月说。

第二天中午<sup>[55]</sup>吃饭的时候，马天明对谢心月说：“我们快去问问他吧。他是我们的老师，他是一个好老师。”

“你去问吧，我不想去。”谢心月说。

马天明笑笑：“快去吧！车老师是很好的。”

谢心月想了想：“好吧，车老师一个人<sup>[56]</sup>在那儿吃饭。我们过去<sup>[57]</sup>吧。”



## 他是人吗？

谢心月和马天明走到车老师的后面<sup>[58]</sup>，车老师没有看到他们。

看到车老师的饭很多，还<sup>[59]</sup>没吃，谢心月对马天明说：“老师的饭是不是不太好吃<sup>[60]</sup>？我去拿我们的饭来一起吃吧。”

她一边说，一边去拿饭。

“我们不是来和老师吃饭的……”马天明回头<sup>[61]</sup>叫她。

车老师听到后面有人，回头看到了马天明。

“老师好。”

“你吃饭了吗？”

“我们还没有吃饭，我看到老师你也没吃……”马天明的话没说完<sup>[62]</sup>，车老师的饭都已经吃完<sup>[63]</sup>了！

这时候<sup>[64]</sup>，谢心月回来了，手里<sup>[65]</sup>拿的是她和马天明的饭。

“我已经吃完了，你们吃吧。”车老师走的时候，对他们笑笑。



“这怎么可能……那么<sup>[66]</sup>多饭，一下子<sup>[67]</sup>都没了！”谢心月说。可是马天明也不知道，他们都不知道车老师是怎么吃完的。

“车老师是外星来的……”马天明一边吃一边说。

“车老师和我们一样<sup>[68]</sup>，和我们说一样的话，怎么可能是外星人？”谢心月说。

马天明还在吃：“可是，你也看到了，他一边用左手写字，一边用右手写字，一边看书。我想他是外星人吧。”

马天明吃完了说：“我也不知道。要是我们能到他家去看看<sup>[69]</sup>，可能会知道为什么。你要不要去？”

“你知道车老师的家在什么地方吗？”谢心月问。

马天明说：“我知道！”

谢心月很开心：“好！马天明，我和你一起去。”

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## 车老师的家

第二天下午五点，马天明说：“谢心月，我看见车老师已经走了。我们在他后面，要小心<sup>[70]</sup>一点，不要说话。”

“好的，我知道了。”

他们在车老师后面走了一个多小时<sup>[71]</sup>，谢心月问：“马天明，这是去车老师家的路吗？怎么还没到……”

“这是车老师回家的路，快到车老师家了。”马天明回头对谢心月说。

可是，马天明的话说完的时候，车老师就不见了<sup>[72]</sup>。

“人呢？怎么一下子不见了？”马天明说。

“车老师是不是已经看到我们了？我们这样不太好吧。”谢心月听起来<sup>[73]</sup>有一点不开心<sup>[74]</sup>。

“他不可能<sup>[75]</sup>看到我们。我们小心一点，可能他已经到家了。你看，他的家在前面。”马天明说。



“家里没人……”到了车老师家门边，马天明说。

“可能他去朋友家了吧。我们明天再<sup>[76]</sup>来吧。”谢心月说。

马天明还是想看到车老师：“再看看，可能他还在路上<sup>[77]</sup>。”

可是，一个小时以后，车老师还是没有回来。

“都七点了，我们回家吧。”谢心月说。

“好，那我们明天再来。”

第三天下午，他们又小心地<sup>[78]</sup>走在了车老师后面。可是，不知道怎么了<sup>[79]</sup>，车老师在路上又不见了。他们小心地走到车老师家，可是，他也没有回家。

后来，他们又在车老师后面走了几次<sup>[80]</sup>，每次车老师都不见了，也不在他家里。车老师每天回家以后去了哪里呢？



## 很大的星星

“马天明，我们这样在车老师后面一个多星期<sup>[81]</sup>了，还是什么都不知道。”谢心月说。

马天明没听谢心月说话：“马上<sup>[82]</sup>到车老师家了，我们就去他家门边吧。”

这时候，谢心月看看天，说：“马天明，快看！这里有一个很大的星星！”

马天明也看看天，说：“怎么会<sup>[83]</sup>这样？你看！车老师家上面<sup>[84]</sup>的天有这么大的星星……”



他们说话的时候，走到了车老师家门边。

谢月心说：“车老师的家在大星星的下面<sup>[85]</sup>，可是车老师不在家里。我们在他后面这么多天了，他每天都不回家……”

马天明还在看天。

他说：“外星人的家不会在这里，可是……”不能开门<sup>[86]</sup>去看，马天明很不开心。

“我想去看看。”

“你不怕吗？”谢心月说问。

“我不怕。”马天明说。

“我也不怕。我可以叫我爸爸……来开这个门，他什么门都会开。”谢心月说。

“这样不好。再说<sup>[87]</sup>，我们还不知道车老师是什么人，不能跟你爸爸说。”马天明说。

“那我们能和谁说？”

“我们去跟方老师说吧，车老师家的上面有一个很大的星星，方老师是一个好老师，可能她会和我们来车老师的家看看。”

“好，那我们明天跟她说。”





## 方老师

第二天下午，谢心月和马天明问方老师：“老师，你有没有去过车老师的家？”

“没去过，怎么了？”方老师笑了一下<sup>[88]</sup>，“大家都走了，你们两个怎么还不回家？”

“我们知道车老师的家在哪儿。”谢心月说。

“你能不能和我们一起去车老师的家看看。”马天明很小心地说，他们三个人可以听见<sup>[89]</sup>。

方老师想了想，说，“车老师怎么了？你们为什么要去他家？”

“车老师……他不是人……”马天明说每一个字都很小心。

“你说什么？”方老师听起来有一点生气  
[90]，“你是不是要说，车老师不是一个好老师？”



“不是，他是一个好老师，可是，他和我们不一样。”马天明说。

“有什么不一样？”方老师问。

“他是火星来的。”谢心月不小心<sup>[91]</sup>跟方老师说了。“我们在他后面几次。可是，他在路上每次都会一下子不见了。”

“我们每次去他家，他都不在家。你和我们一起去看看，好不好？”马天明又说。

“他家上面有一个星星，星星也很大。我们这里的天上没有，我家，马天明家上面也没有。”谢心月又说。

“怎么会有那么大的星星？”方老师想。

“好吧。那我和你们去看看。”两个小朋友说的话有一点好笑，可是，方老师还是去了。

到了车老师家门边，他们看见里面有人。



“车老师在家……”谢心月看看马天明。

“车老师在家看书……？怎么可能……？”  
马天明看看谢心月，“他知道我们要来。”

谢心月说：“可是，他怎么会知道我们要来？”

马天明又看看天：“怎么会这样？天上的大星星没有了。”

“好了<sup>[92]</sup>，我不知道你们两个在车老师家看到过什么。可是，我看到车老师在家，以后不要再说他是火星人<sup>[93]</sup>了。”方老师有一点生气，“快回家吧。”

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# 本子

那天<sup>[94]</sup>以后，马天明和谢心月就不再去车老师家了。可是，他们还是每天都在说车老师。

“马天明，我看到车老师手里有一个本子<sup>[95]</sup>，他每天都在上面写东西。”



“什么本子？”

“有一次<sup>[96]</sup>，我们看到他一边用左手写字，一边用右手写字，一边看书，对不对？写字的那个本子和他每天拿的本子是一样的。”

“你看过那个本子上写的东西吗？”马天明问。

“没有。那个本子里在他手里。我拿不到那个本子，没有看过本子里的字。”谢心月说。

“不用拿到<sup>[97]</sup>那个本子，我们也可以看到。”马天明笑了一下。

谢心月很开心：“那，本子在哪儿呢？”

马天明想了想：“听说<sup>[98]</sup>，今天下午有很多老师不在，车老师也可能不在。他出去<sup>[99]</sup>的时候，我们可以看看他的本子里面写了什么。”



“你说得对。”谢心月说。

下午三点多的时候，车老师出去了，他没有拿那个本子。学生们有的在看书，有的在写字。

马天明和谢心月很开心，可是，他们不想大家知道他们要去看老师的东西。



“谢心月，”马天明一边叫他的朋友，一边看车老师的本子。“我的本子在老师那里，我去看看。”

“我的本子也在老师那里。”说完，谢心月和马天明一起走了过去。

“这么多本子，哪个是我的？”谢心月在看学生们的本子，马天明在看车老师的本子。



# 不认识的字

车老师的本子上写了很多字，可是，马天明不认识<sup>[100]</sup>本子上的字。“你见过这样的字吗？”马天明说话的时候很小心，不想大家听到。

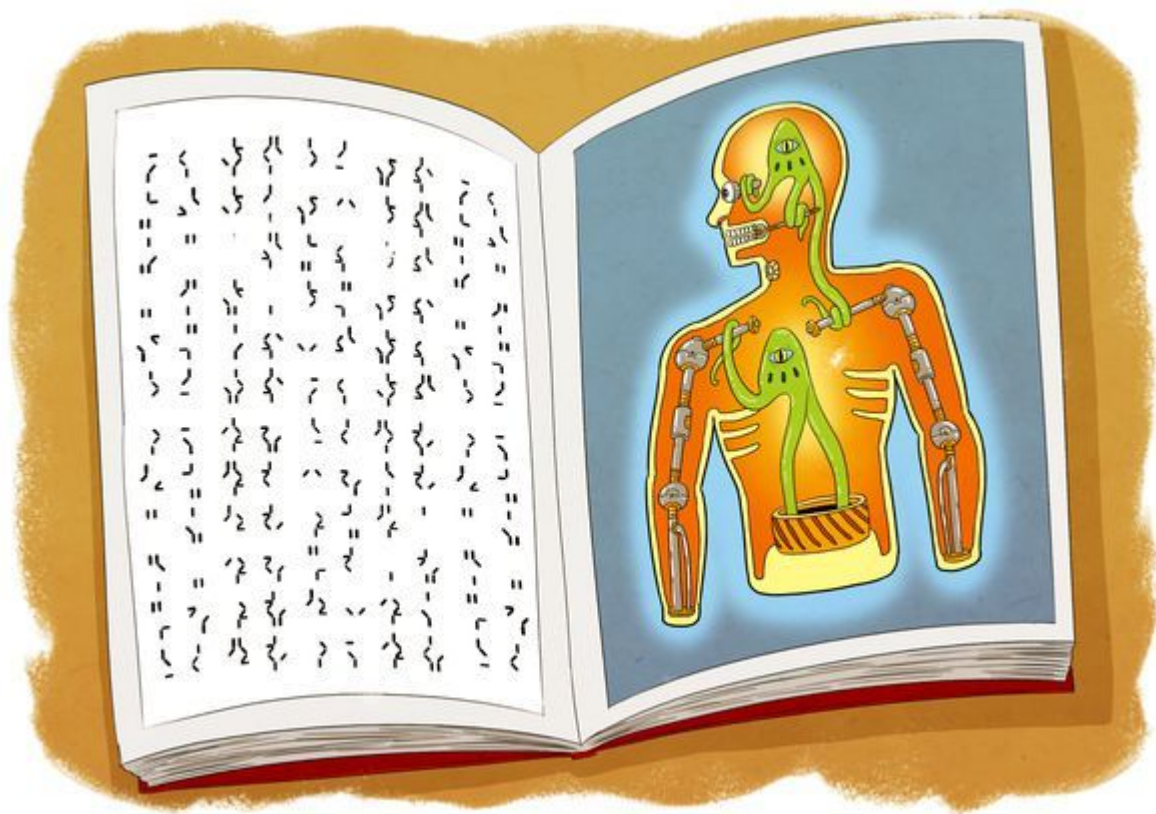
“没见过。车老师怎么会写这样的字？这会不会是外星人的字？”

谢心月拿了几个学生的本子，可是，她看的是车老师的本子。

“很有可能。”马天明说。“我们都认识字。可是，他写外星人的字，外星人认识，我们不认识。”

谢心月点点头<sup>[101]</sup>，问：“你看完了吗？一会儿<sup>[102]</sup>车老师回来看到我们，他会不开心的。”

“这是什么？”本子上有一个人，这个人的头里面有一个人，心里面还有一个人。外星人不好看<sup>[103]</sup>，可是他们看起来<sup>[104]</sup>很开心。外星人的手里还拿了很多东西。



“马天明！”谢心月叫了出来<sup>[105]</sup>。“快看！怎么会有这样的东西？”

“小心一点，不要叫，也不要怕。”马天明说。

谢心月小心地说，“去跟方老师说吧。”

他们去见了方老师。方老师看到了他们，还看到了车老师的本子。

方老师说：“你们怎么有车老师的本子？”

“方老师，车老师的本子……里面写的字我们都不认识，还有……你快看一下吧。”马天明说。

“你们两个怎么还在说车老师？”方老师拿起那个本子，看了看，说：“你们要我看什么？里面什么都没有。”



“不可能！”马天明和谢心月一起说。马天明拿起本子，说：“我们都看到了，有很多外星人的字，还有外星人在一个人里面……”

“怎么都没有了？我不知道怎么会这样……”谢心月有一点不开心。

“你们两个，我也不知道说什么了。”方老师说。





## 车老师走了

一天中午吃饭的时候，谢心月问马天明：“你说，车老师是不是知道了？”

“有可能。”马天明一边吃饭，一边说。



又过了几个月<sup>[106]</sup>，他们听说车老师要走了，两个人都不太开心。他们都知道车老师是

外星人，可是，很多人都不知道。

“你说，车老师为什么要走？”谢心月问马天明。

马天明想了想说：“车老师想，可能我们都  
知道他是外星人了。”

“也有可能是他要回火星了吧。”谢心月笑  
了一下，“我也想和他一起去火星看看！”

马天明说：“我想我们去了火星以后，就  
不能回来了。”

说完，两个人都笑了。



车老师走的那天，谢心月和马天明拿到了车老师的那个本子。

“这是我的本子，给你们吧。”车老师说。

马天明和谢心月一起说：“谢谢老师。”

车老师很开心地<sup>[107]</sup>说：“我还是你们的朋友。再见！”

马天明和谢心月不太开心：“老师再见！”

车老师走的时候，谁都没有问他要去哪儿，以后还会不会回来。

“马天明，本子上写的东西都没了。”谢心月看完以后说。



# 水老师

车老师走了以后的第二年<sup>[108]</sup>，又来了一个新的男老师。

“大家好，我是水老师，今年三十二岁。”男老师说，“我是你们今年的新老师，很开心认识大家。”

“水？”一个男生<sup>[109]</sup>笑了，“我没听过。”

“我想，下一个<sup>[110]</sup>老师会叫火老师。”马天明也笑了。大家听他这样说，也都笑了。



马天明和谢心月没想到<sup>[111]</sup>的是，水老师和车老师一样，也看过很多星星和火星的书。每次说到火星，水老师也会说很多。

“水老师，你知道吗？”谢心月说，“去年我们有一个车老师。他和你一样，每次说到火星，也会说很多。”

“水老师，你可能不认识他。”马天明说。  
“他……很不一样。”

“怎么不一样？”水老师一边笑一边问。

“他很喜欢<sup>[112]</sup>星星，很喜欢火星。”马天明说。

“我也是！”水老师说。“我认识车老师。他是我的好朋友。”

“你也是？那，你也是火星人？”马天明问。

水老师说：“他和我说过你们。他说你们喜欢去他家，说你们也喜欢看他的本子。”

“他都知道！”谢心月说。

“你们还有他的本子吗？”水老师问。

“你要这个本子吗？”马天明不开心。

“我不要。”水老师说。“车老师已经给你们了。”



“可是本子上面没有字了！”谢心月说。

“以后会有的。”水老师说。“会有的。”



# Key Words

## 关键词 (*Guānjiàncí*)

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1. 岁 suì *mw.* years old
2. 小学生 xiǎoxuéshēng *n.* elementary school student
3. 新 xīn *adj.* new
4. 叫 jiào *v.* to be called, to call; to tell (someone to do something)
5. 一起 yīqǐ *adv.* together
6. 上学 shàngxué *vo.* to start school, to go to school
7. 已经 yǐjīng *adv.* already
8. 外星人 wàixīngrén *n.* alien
9. 有时候 yǒu shíhou *phrase* sometimes
10. 山上 shānshàng *phrase* on the mountain(s)
11. 星星 xīngxīng *n.* star, stars
12. 可是 kěshì *conj.* but
13. 怕 pà *v.* to be afraid (of)
14. 天上 tiānshàng *n.* in the sky

15. 看见 kànjian *vc.* to see
16. 见过 jiàn guo *phrase* have met before
17. 笑 xiào *v.* to laugh, to smile
18. 要是 yàoshi *conj.* if
19. 怎么 zěnmē *adv.* how
20. 说话 shuōhuà *vo.* to speak (words), to talk
21. 想了想 xiǎng le xiǎng *phrase* thought about it for a second
22. 可能 kěnéng *adv.; aux* maybe, possibly; possible
23. 又 yòu *adv.* again
24. 家 jiā *mw., n.* measure word for shops; home
25. 地方 dìfang *n.* place
26. 不一样 bù yīyàng *phrase* not the same
27. 听 tīng *v.* to listen (to)
28. 以后 yǐhòu *adv.* after; later, in the future
29. 就 jiù *adv.* just
30. 星期一 Xīngqīyī *tn.* Monday
31. 小朋友 xiǎopéngyou *n.* kid
32. 的时候 de shíhou *phrase* when...

33. 第二天 dì-èr tiān *phrase* the second day
34. 小学 xiǎoxué *n.* elementary school
35. 大家 dàjiā *n.* everyone
36. 有一点 yǒu yīdiǎn *phrase* to be a little (too)
37. 好笑 hǎoxiào *adj.* funny
38. 火星 Huǒxīng *pn.* Mars
39. 每次 měi cì *phrase* every time
40. 开心 kāixīn *adj.* happy
41. 这么 zhème *adv.* so...
42. 有一天 yǒu yī tiān *phrase* one day...
43. 回来 huílai *vc.* to come back
44. 拿 ná *v.* to get, to hold
45. 东西 dōngxi *n.* thing(s), stuff
46. 门边 mén biān *phrase* by the door
47. 看到 kàndào *vc.* to see
48. 里面 lǐmiàn *n.* inside
49. 一边 yībiān *conj.* while doing... (two things)
50. 看书 kànshū *vo.* to read, to study

51. 第一次 dī-yī cì *phrase* first time
52. 这样 zhèyàng *pr.* like this
53. 听到 tīngdào *vc.* to hear
54. 回家 huíjiā *vo.* to go home
55. 中午 zhōngwǔ *n.* noon
56. 一个人 yī gè rén *phrase* alone
57. 过去 guòqu *vc.* to go over
58. 后面 hòumian *n.* behind
59. 还 hái *adv.* still
60. 好吃 hǎochī *adj.* tasty
61. 回头 huítóu *vo.* to turn one's head
62. 说完 shuō wán *vc.* to finish speaking
63. 吃完 chī wán *vc.* to finish eating
64. 这时候 zhè shíhou *phrase* at this time
65. 手里 shǒu lǐ *phrase* in one's hand
66. 那么 nàme *adv.* so...
67. 一下子 yīxiàzi *adv.* all of a sudden; all at once
68. 一样 yīyàng *n.* the same

69. 看看 kànkān v. to take a look
70. 小心 xiǎoxīn v. to be careful
71. 小时 xiǎoshí n. hour
72. 不见了 bùjiàn le *phrase* disappeared
73. 听起来 tīng qǐlai *vc.* to sound...
74. 不开心 bù kāixīn *phrase* not happy, to be unhappy
75. 不可能 bù kěnéng *phrase* impossible (to)
76. 再 zài *adv.* again (in the future)
77. 路上 lùshang n. on the road, on the way
78. 小心地 xiǎoxīn de *phrase* carefully
79. 怎么了 zěnmē le *phrase* what happened, what's the matter
80. 次 cì *mw.* time(s)
81. 一个多星期 yī gè duō xīngqī *phrase* over a week
82. 马上 mǎshàng *adv.* right away
83. 怎么会 zěnmē huì *phrase* how could
84. 上面 shàngmian n. on, on top, above
85. 下面 xiàmian n. below, under
86. 开门 kāimén *vo.* to open the door

87. 再说 zàishuō *conj.* furthermore, besides
88. 一下 yīxià *adv.* briefly, for a second
89. 听见 tīngjiàn *vc.* to hear
90. 生气 shēngqì *vo., adj.* to get angry; angry
91. 不小心 bù xiǎoxīn *phrase* to not be careful; accidentally
92. 好了 hǎo le *phrase* done
93. 火星人 Huǒxīng-rén *pn.* Martian
94. 那天 nà tiān *tn.* that day
95. 本子 běnzi *n.* notebook
96. 一次 yīcì *phrase* one time
97. 拿到 ná dào *vc.* to get, to manage to get
98. 听说 tīngshuō *v.* to hear tell, to hear said (that)
99. 出去 chūqu *vc.* to go out
100. 认识 rènshi *v.* to recognize
101. 点点头 diǎndian tóu *phrase* to (briefly) nod one's head
102. 一会儿 yīhuìr *tn.* a little while
103. 好看 hǎokàn *adj.* good-looking
104. 看起来 kàn qǐlai *vc.* to look...

105. 出来 chūlai *vc.* to come out
106. 几个月 jǐ gè yuè *phrase* several months
107. 开心地 kāixīn de *phrase* happily
108. 第二年 dì-èr nián *phrase* second year
109. 男生 nánshēng *n.* boy, male student
110. 下一个 xià yī ge *phrase* next (one)
111. 没想到 méi xiǎngdào *phrase* to never have imagined
112. 喜欢 xǐhuan *v.* to like



# Part of Speech Key

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*adj.* Adjective

*adv.* Adverb

*aux.* Auxiliary Verb

*conj.* Conjunction

*cov.* Coverb

*mw.* Measure word

*n.* Noun

*on.* Onomatopoeia

*part.* Particle

*prep.* Preposition

*pr.* Pronoun

*pn.* Proper noun

*tn.* Time Noun

*v.* Verb

*vc.* Verb plus complement

*vo.* Verb plus object

# Discussion Questions

## 讨论问题 (Tǎolùn Wèntí)

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### Chapter 1: 外星人

1. 马爸爸的书里写了什么？
2. 你喜欢看星星吗？你觉得星星上有外星人吗？
3. 要是你见了一个会说英文的外星人，你会跟他说什么？

### Chapter 2: 车老师

1. 车老师是哪人？
2. 车老师为什么知道火星在哪里？
3. 马天明和谢心月看到了什么？

### **Chapter 3: 他是人吗？**

1. 马天明为什么说车老师是外星人？
2. 你觉得车老师是外星人吗？为什么？
3. 马天明和谢心月为什么要去车老师家看看？

### **Chapter 4: 车老师的家**

1. 车老师在路上不见了，你觉得车老师去了哪里？
2. 你觉得车老师知道马天明和谢心月跟在他后面吗？为什么？
3. 你觉得车老师的家里有什么？

### **Chapter 5: 很大的星星**

1. 你觉得那个大星星上面有什么？
2. 马天明为什么不开心？

3. 你想去车老师的家里看看吗？

## **Chapter 6: 方老师**

1. 方老师去过车老师家吗？

2. 方老师为什么和他们去车老师家？

3. 方老师和他们去车老师家看到了什么？

## **Chapter 7: 本子**

1. 他们还去车老师家吗？

2. 他们为什么想看车老师的本子？

3. 他们想怎么看到那个本子？

## **Chapter 8: 不认识的字**

1. 车老师的本子上有什么？

2. 方老师看到本子上的字了吗？

3. 你想想，为什么本子上的字没有了？

## **Chapter 9: 车老师走了**

1. 大家知道车老师是外星人吗？

2. 你想想，为什么车老师要走呢？

3. 车老师给了他们什么？

## **Chapter 10: 水老师**

1. 新来的老师叫什么名字？

2. 新来的老师认识车老师吗？

3. 你想想，新来的老师是外星人吗？

# Extensive Reading

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After years of studying Chinese, many people ask, “why can’t I become fluent in Chinese?” Fluency can only happen when the language enters our “comfort zone.” This comfort comes after significant exposure to and experience with the language. The more times you meet a word, phrase, or grammar point the more readily it will enter your comfort zone.

In the world of language research, experts agree that learners can acquire new vocabulary through reading only if the overall text can be understood. Decades of research indicate that if we know approximately 98% of the words in a book, we can comfortably “pick up” the 2% that is unfamiliar. Reading at this [98% comprehension level](#) is referred to as “extensive reading.”

Research in extensive reading has shown that it accelerates vocabulary learning and helps the learner to naturally understand grammar. Perhaps most importantly, it trains the brain to automatically recognize familiar language, thereby freeing up mental energy to focus on meaning and ideas. As they build reading speed and fluency, learners will move from reading “word by word” to processing “chunks of language.” A defining feature is that it’s less *painful* than the “intensive reading” commonly used in textbooks. In fact, extensive reading can be downright fun.

# Graded Readers

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**Graded readers** are the best books for learners to “extensively” read. Research has taught us that learners need to “encounter” a word 10-30 times before truly learning it, and often many more times for particularly complicated or abstract words. Graded readers are appropriate for learners because the language is controlled and simplified, as opposed to the language in native texts, which is inevitably difficult and often demotivating. Reading extensively with graded readers allows learners to bring together all of the language they have studied and absorb how the words naturally work together.

To become fluent, learners must not only understand the meaning of a word, but also understand its nuances, how to use it in conversation, how to pair it with other words, where it fits into natural word order, and how it is used in grammar structures. No textbook could ever be written to teach all of this explicitly. When used properly, a textbook introduces the language and provides the basic meanings, while graded readers *consolidate*, *strengthen*, and *deepen understanding*.

Without graded readers, learners would have to study dictionaries, textbooks, sample dialogs, and simple conversations until they have randomly encountered enough Chinese for it to enter their comfort zones. With proper use of graded readers, learners can tackle this issue and develop greater fluency *now*, at their *current* levels, instead of waiting until some period in the distant future. With a stronger foundation and greater confidence at their current levels, learners are encouraged and motivated to continue their Chinese studies to even greater heights. Plus, they’ll quickly learn that reading Chinese is fun!

# Appendix A: Character Comparison Reference

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This appendix is designed to help Chinese teachers and learners use the Mandarin Companion graded readers as a companion to the most popular university textbooks and the HSK word lists.

The tables below compare the characters and vocabulary used in other study materials with those found in this Mandarin Companion graded reader. The tables below will display the exact characters and vocabulary used in this book and not covered by these sources. A learner who has studied these textbooks will likely find it easier to read this graded reader by focusing on these characters and words.



## Integrated Chinese Level 1, Part 1 (3rd Ed.)

*Words and characters in this story not covered by these textbooks:*

Character	Pinyin	Word(s)	Pinyin
心	xīn	心 开心 小心 心里	xīn kāixīn xiǎoxīn xīnli
马	mǎ	马 马上	Mǎ mǎshàng
山	shān	山上	shānshàng
怕	pà	不怕 怕	bù pà pà
又	yòu	又	yòu
完	wán	完 说完	wán shuōwán
拿	ná	拿 拿到	ná nádào
本	běn	本子	běnzǐ
火	huǒ	火星 火	Huǒxīng huǒ
次	cì	每次 第一次 几次 次	měi cì dì-yī cì jǐ cì cì
门	mén	门边 开门 门	mén-biān kāimén mén
左	zuǒ	左手	zuǒshǒu
右	yòu	右手	yòushǒu

头

tóu

回头  
点点头  
头

huítóu  
diǎndian tóu  
tóu

## New Practical Chinese Reader, Book 1 (1st Ed.)

*Words and characters in this story not covered by these textbooks:*

Character	Pinyin	Word(s)	Pinyin
已	yǐ	已经	yǐjīng
山	shān	山上	shānshàng
笑	xiào	笑 好笑 笑笑	xiào hǎoxiào xiàoxiao
又	yòu	又	yòu
地	de	地方 地	dìfang de
完	wán	完 说完	wán shuōwán
后	Hòu	以后 后面 后来	yǐhòu hòumiàn hòulái
就	jiù	就	jiù
边	biān	一边 门边	yībiān simplified wordstring does not exist
火	huǒ	火星 火	Huǒxīng huǒ
走	zǒu	走	zǒu
门	mén	门边 开门 门	mén-biān kāimén mén
左	zuǒ	左手	zuǒshǒu
手	shǒu	左手 右手 手里	zuǒshǒu yòushǒu shǒulǐ

右	yòu	右手	yòushǒu
路	lù	路 路上	lù lùshang

## Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) Levels 1-2

*Words and characters in this story not covered by these levels:*

Character	Pinyin	Word(s)	Pinyin
心	xīn	心 开心 小心 心里	xīn kāixīn xiǎoxīn xīnli
马	mǎ	马 马上	mǎ mǎshàng
山	shān	山上	shānshàng
怕	pà	不怕 怕	bù pà pà
文	wén	中文	Zhōngwén
跟	gēn	跟	gēn
又	yòu	又	yòu
地	de	地方 地	dìfang de
方	fāng	地方 方	dìfang fāng
拿	ná	拿 拿到	ná nádào
用	yòng	用 不用	yòng bùyòng
头	tóu	回头 点点头 头	huítóu diǎndian tóu tóu

# Appendix B: Grammar Point Index

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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.

Chapter 1	
The "all" adverb "dou"	都 + Verb / Adj.
Tag questions with "ma"	……是吗 / 对吗 / 好吗 ?
Reduplication of verbs	Verb + Verb
After a specific time with "yihou"	Time / Verb + 以后
Expressing "if... then..." with "yaoshi"	要是……, 就……
Expressing a learned skill with "hui"	会 + Verb
The "also" adverb "ye"	也 + Verb / Adj.
Expressing "will" with "hui"	会 + Verb
How to do something with "zenme"	怎么 + Verb ?
Expressing "when" with "de shihou"	……的时候
Two words for "but"	……, 可是 / 但是……

<b>Chapter 2</b>	
Suggestions with "ba"	Command + 吧
Expressing location with "zai... shang / xia / li"	在 + Place + 上 / 下 / 里 / 旁边
Simultaneous tasks with "yibian"	一边 + Verb 1 (, ) 一边 + Verb 2
Using "dui" with verbs	Subj. + 对 + Person + Verb
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
Expressing "all at once" with "yixiazi"	Subj. + 一下子 + Verb + 了
Expressing "and" with "he"	Noun 1 + 和 + Noun 2
Expressing ability or possibility with "neng"	能 + Verb
Basic comparisons with "yiyang"	Noun 1 + 跟 / 和 + Noun 2 + 一样 + Adj.
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
Expressing "again" in the future with "zai"	再 + Verb
Expressing "then..." with "name"	那么.....
Expressing duration with "le"	Verb + 了 + Duration
Sequencing past events with "houlai"	..... , 后来 .....
<b>Chapter 5</b>	
Expressing "everything" with "shenme dou"	什么 + 都 / 也.....
Expressing "in addition" with "zaishuo"	..... , 再说 , .....
Expressing "with" with "gen"	跟..... + Verb
Causative verbs	Subj. + 让 / 叫 / 请 / 使 + Person + Predicate

# Other Stories from Mandarin Companion

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## **Breakthrough Readers: 150 Characters**

### **The Misadventures of Zhou Haisheng 《周海生》**

*by John Pasden, Jared Turner*

Zhou Haisheng is a fun-loving and determined young boy whose life revolves around school and his family's Chinese restaurant. Always well-intentioned, he finds ways to help out his hard-working parents with the family business. Whether it's inventing his own noodle recipe, delivering the wrong order to a customer, or resorting to extremes when a competing noodle shop opens across the street, Zhou Haisheng manages to combine his mischief and wit to save the day.

### **Xiao Ming, Boy Sherlock 《小明》**

*by John Pasden, Jared Turner*

A thief at school, fires starting out of nowhere, and an elusive admirer bringing flowers are all mysteries that test the budding skills of Xiao Ming (boy Sherlock Holmes). With the help of his older brother, Xiao Ming cracks the cases and reveals the truth hidden behind the mysteries.

### **In Search of Hua Ma 《花马》**

*by John Pasden, Jared Turner*

As a young boy is walking through the mountains in search of a gift for his mother's birthday, he comes across an ancient house. An old lady beckons him inside and asks him to find "Hua Ma". As he leaves, he finds himself inexplicably transported to the

distant island of Hainan while the old lady and the house have disappeared. Unsure of who or what Hua Ma is, he sets out on a quest to find him, realizing this mysterious Hua Ma may be his only chance to find his way back home!

## **Just Friends? 《我们是朋友吗? 》**

*by John Pasden, Jared Turner*

Two boys have been friends forever, but what happens when they fall for the same girl in college?

## Level 1 Readers: 300 Characters

### **The Secret Garden 《秘密花园》**

*by Frances Hodgson Burnett*

After an epidemic leaves her an orphan, Li Ye is sent off to live with her reclusive uncle in his sprawling estate in Nanjing. She learns of a secret garden where no one has set foot in ten years. With the help of new friends, she brings the garden back to life and learns the healing power of friendship and love.

### **The Sixty Year Dream 《六十年的梦》**

*based on "Rip Van Winkle" by Washington Irving*

Zhou Xuefa (Rip Van Winkle) is well loved by everyone in his town, except his nagging wife. One day after a bad scolding from his wife, he goes for a walk into the mountains and meets a mysterious old man. After drinking some wine offered by the old man, Zhou Xuefa falls into a deep sleep. He awakes to a time very different than what he once knew.

### **The Monkey's Paw 《猴爪》**

*by W. W. Jacobs*

Mr. and Mrs. Zhang live with their grown son. One day an old friend comes to visit and tells of a monkey's paw that has magical powers to grant three wishes to the holder. Against his better judgment, he reluctantly gives the monkey paw to the Zhang family, with a warning that the wishes come with a great price for trying to change fate.

## **The Country of the Blind 《盲人国》**

*by H. G. Wells*

Chen Fangyuan finds himself trapped in a valley with a people for whom a disease has eliminated their vision and no longer have a concept of sight. His insistence that he can see causes the entire community to think he is crazy. Then one day the village doctors propose a disturbing cure for his insanity.

## **Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Curly-Haired Company 《卷发公司的案子》**

*based on "The Red Headed League" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

Mr. Xie was recently hired by the Curly Haired Company to copy articles from a book. He was selected from hundreds of applicants because of his very curly hair. When the company unexpectedly closes, Mr. Xie visits Gao Ming (Sherlock Holmes) with his strange story. Gao Ming is certain something is not right, but will he solve the mystery in time?

## **The Prince and the Pauper 《王子和穷孩子》**

*by Mark Twain*

During a chance encounter, two nearly identical boys, one a poor beggar and the other a prince, exchange places. Both children soon discover that neither life is as carefree as they expected.

## **Emma 《安末》**

*by Jane Austen*

Clever, rich, and single, the beautiful An Mo (Emma Woodhouse) is focused on her career as fashion designer in the glamor of 21st-century Shanghai. She sees no need for romance in her life, but when she tries to find a boyfriend for her new friend Fangfang (Harriet), her carefully laid plans being to unravel. As she ignores the warnings of her good friend Shi Wenzheng (Mr. Knightley), her decisions bring consequences that she never expected. With its witty and charming characters, Emma is often seen as Jane Austen's most flawless work.

## **The Ransom of Red Chief 《红猴的价格》**

*by O. Henry*

Trying to get some fast cash, two bumbling crooks devise a plan to kidnap the son of a wealthy family in a village and hold him for ransom. When their ransom notes remain unanswered, the two crooks find out for themselves how naughty a child can be.

## **Level 2 Readers: 450 Characters**

### **Great Expectations: Part 1 《美好的前途（上）》**

*by Charles Dickens*

In Part 1, Xiaomao is raised by his short-tempered older sister and her husband outside of Shanghai. After meeting the beautiful Bingbing (Estella), Xiaomao dreams of leaving his life of poverty behind. His prospects for the future are bleak, until one day a mysterious benefactor gives Xiaomao the opportunity of a lifetime.

### **Great Expectations: Part 2 《美好的前途（下）》**

*by Charles Dickens*

In Part 2, Xiaomao (Pip) leaves his life of poverty behind to seek his fortunes in Shanghai and win the heart of the beautiful yet cold-hearted Bingbing (Estella). Xiaomao's world is turned upside down when his mysterious benefactor is revealed and his deepest secrets are brought into the light of day.

### **Journey to the Center of the Earth 《地心游记》**

*by Jules Verne*

Join Professor Luo and his niece Xiaojing in their daring quest down the mouth of a volcano to reach the center of the earth. Guided by a mysterious passage on an ancient parchment and accompanied by their faithful guide Lao Xu, the three explorers encounter subterranean phenomena, prehistoric animals, and vast underground seas.

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