

## Learn about Chinese characters 汉字知多少

### Past and present 过去与现在

1 Chinese characters have a long history. They gradually evolved from symbols that look like drawings to today's square-shaped characters. Look and compare the scripts below.

Oracle bone script, dated from 1300 BC, is believed to be the earliest form of Chinese writing.



Today, people in mainland China use these simplified Chinese characters.



2 Look at how Chinese characters have evolved. Can you guess what the four characters mean?

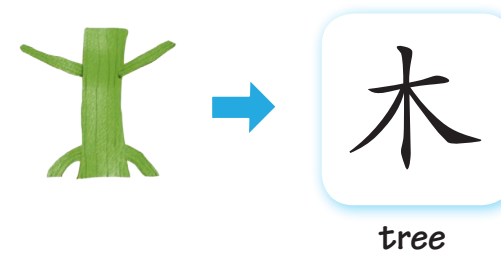
Past				Present			
人	人	人	人	人	人	人	(uǒwǎny)
日	日	日	日	日	日	日	(sūn)
車	車	車	車	車	車	车	(chē)
鳥	鳥	鳥	鳥	鳥	鳥	鸟	(niǎo)

Today, the simplified Chinese characters are mainly used in mainland China. The traditional Chinese characters are used in some other countries and regions.

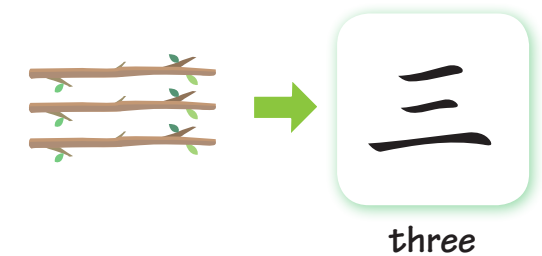


### How were Chinese characters formed? 汉字是如何创造的?

The ancient Chinese mainly used four methods to create characters. Learn about the four categories of the Chinese characters.



1 Pictograms take on the shape of objects.



2 Ideograms are simple signs. They depict abstract meanings.



3 Ideogrammatic compounds combine two or more existing characters to express new meanings.

4 Semantic-phonetic compounds are made up of two parts. One indicates the meaning of the character. The other indicates the sound.

