AIkits

LANGUAGES · CHEAT SHEET

Chinese radicals cheat sheet

The 23 radicals behind most HSK 1–2 characters, and key numbers

1 23 radicals that file 204 of the 371 HSK 1–2 characters

Radical	Meaning	Characters	Examples
口	mouth	28	吃 *chī* eat · 喝 *hē* drink · 叫 *jiào* to be called
人 · 亻	person	20	你 *nǐ* you · 他 *tā* he · 休 *xiū* rest
言 · 讠	speech	15	说 *shuō* speak · 话 *huà* words · 语 *yǔ* language
心 · 忄	heart	12	想 *xiǎng* think · 忘 *wàng* forget · 忙 *máng* busy
木	tree, wood	11	杯 *bēi* cup · 椅 *yǐ* chair · 桌 *zhuō* table
女	woman	10	妈 *mā* mother · 姐 *jiě* older sister · 她 *tā* she
一	one	10	三 *sān* three · 上 *shàng* up · 下 *xià* down
辶	walking, movement	10	进 *jìn* enter · 远 *yuǎn* far · 送 *sòng* deliver
日	sun, day	9	早 *zǎo* early · 晚 *wǎn* late · 明 *míng* bright
水 · 氵	water	7	水 *shuǐ* water · 洗 *xǐ* wash · 游 *yóu* swim
糸 · 纟	silk, thread	7	红 *hóng* red · 绿 *lǜ* green · 给 *gěi* give
月	moon	6	月 *yuè* month · 期 *qī* period · 有 *yǒu* have
目	eye	6	看 *kàn* look · 睡 *shuì* sleep · 眼 *yǎn* eye
宀	roof	6	家 *jiā* home · 室 *shì* room · 客 *kè* guest
土	earth	6	地 *dì* ground · 坐 *zuò* sit · 场 *chǎng* field
足 · 𧾷	foot	6	跑 *pǎo* run · 跳 *tiào* jump · 路 *lù* road
艹 · 竹 · 大 · 巾 · 十 · 八 · 乙	grass · bamboo · big · cloth · ten · eight · second	5 each	菜 *cài* vegetable · 笔 *bǐ* pen · 天 *tiān* sky · 师 *shī* teacher · 午 *wǔ* noon · 六 *liù* six · 书 *shū* book

2 The 青 *qīng* sound family

请 *qǐng*	please: 讠 speech + 青
清 *qīng*	clear: 氵 water + 青
晴 *qíng*	sunny: 日 sun + 青
情 *qíng*	feeling: 忄 heart + 青

TIP

Simplified side forms change every character that uses them: 言 → 讠, 糸 → 纟, 金 → 钅, 食 → 饣.

3 Numbers worth knowing

214	Kangxi radicals: Zihui (1615), Kangxi Dictionary (1716); all in Unicode
201	Main radicals in China's official table (2009, revised 2022)
3,500	Common characters in China's 2013 standard of 8,105
3,000 / 1,200	HSK, all levels: about 3,000 to recognise, 1,200 to write (100 for levels 1–2)