AIkits

LANGUAGES · CHEAT SHEET

Chinese study plan cheat sheet

Five parts, a 12-month plan, realistic time frames and the tools

1 Five parts, worked on together

Sounds	Pinyin chart, four tones, neutral tone. Tones change meaning: 妈 *mā* (mother), 马 *mǎ* (horse)
Characters	Common components (radicals) first
Words	The official HSK 1 list
Patterns	Each pattern with one example sentence
Input, speaking	15 min learner audio a day, one conversation a week

2 Realistic numbers

88 weeks	FSI full-time training for Mandarin to professional level (ILR 3), 2,200 class hours. Spanish: 30 weeks
~300 hours	1 hour a day, 6 days a week, for a year
300 → 11,000	HSK words, cumulative: level 1 → levels 7–9

TIP

If a checkpoint isn't met, repeat the block instead of moving on.

3 12-month plan: about 1 hour a day, 6 days a week

Months	Focus	Daily hour (minutes)	Checkpoint
1	Pinyin, four tones, neutral tone	25 pinyin and tone pairs · 20 first words with audio · 15 learner audio	You can read any pinyin syllable aloud with the right tone
2	Survival phrases, numbers, first characters	20 SRS · 20 phrases out loud · 20 learner audio	You can introduce yourself and ask a few simple questions
3–4	Common components, HSK 1 words, level 1 patterns (是, 有, 了, questions with 吗)	20 SRS · 15 characters · 15 patterns · 10 audio	You can work through an official HSK 1 sample paper
5–6	HSK 2 words, 过 and measure words, first graded reader	20 SRS · 20 reading or listening · 20 patterns and own sentences	You finish your first graded reader
7–9	Longer input, weekly speaking	20 SRS · 30 input · 10 shadowing or writing; one conversation a week	You can talk for ten minutes about your day and plans with a patient partner
10–12	HSK 3 words and patterns, native material with subtitles, optional HSK	15 SRS · 35 input · 10 output; one conversation a week	You can follow a learner podcast episode without the transcript

4 One tool of each type

Dictionary	Spaced repetition	Grammar	Input	Speaking
MDBG (free, web), Pleco (app)	Anki, or a notebook with a review routine	AllSet Chinese Grammar Wiki (free)	Mandarin Companion, Chinese Breeze, learner podcasts	A tutor (italki, Preply) or a language-exchange partner