

## **What is HSK Exam?**

China's Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi, also known as the "HSK" or the Chinese Language Proficiency Test, is a standardized test developed by the HSK Test Center at the Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU). The HSK test is meant to assess the Chinese language proficiency of non-native speakers (foreigners, overseas Chinese speakers and those of China's ethnic minorities). It aims to assess the examinee's ability to understand spoken and written Chinese. The HSK certification is a widely recognized measure of one's Chinese language proficiency level and can be used in university admissions and job applications. There are six levels, each one explained as follows.

### **HSK Level 1**

Students who have no or very limited prior knowledge of Chinese language and may not know basic Chinese words and phrases.

- You will acquire 150 basic Chinese characters and master the most basic HSK grammar.
- You can understand and use very simple Chinese words and phrases, and meet the most basic communication needs.

### **HSK Level 2**

Students who know some basic Chinese words and phrases but find it difficult to confidently conduct some routine communication tasks in Chinese.

- You will acquire 300 Chinese characters and master HSK Level 2 related grammar.
- You will have an excellent grasp of basic Chinese and can conduct tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.

### **HSK Level 3**

Students who can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on routine topics in predictable everyday situations.

- You will acquire 600 Chinese characters and master HSK Level 3 related grammar.
- You can use Chinese to serve the demands of your personal lives, studies and work, and are capable of completing most of the communicative tasks you experience when travelling in China.

### **HSK Level 4**

Students who can communicate with confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional fields with occasional pauses and mistakes.

- You will acquire 1200 Chinese characters and master HSK Level 4 related grammar.

- You can discuss a relatively wide range of topics in Chinese and are capable of communicating fluently with native Chinese speakers.

### HSK Level 5

Students who can talk with native speakers in Chinese fluently and somewhat effectively. You have a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty in delivering a lengthy Chinese speech.

- You will acquire 1500 Chinese characters and master HSK Level 5 related grammar.
- You can read Chinese newspapers and magazines, watch Chinese films and are capable of writing and delivering lengthy speeches in Chinese.

### HSK Level 6

Students who can understand a wide range of demanding topics, recognize implicit meanings, but still have some difficulty in expressing themselves spontaneously and precisely.

- You will acquire over 2500 Chinese characters and master HSK Level 6 related grammar.
- You can easily understand any information delivered in Chinese and can effectively express yourself in Chinese, both in written and oral form.

### Remarks:

- Listening, Reading and Writing each have a maximum score of 100. HSK 1 and 2 therefore have a maximum score of 200 with 120 points required to pass. The higher levels have a maximum of 300 points with 180 points required to pass. There is no minimum amount of points required for each of the sections as long as the sum is over 120 or 180 points respectively.
- Hanban claims that the HSK's six levels correspond on a one-to-one basis with the six levels of the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#) (CEFR). However, an assessment by the Association of Chinese Teachers in German Speaking Countries concluded that this was a significant overestimation of the competences acquired for these HSK levels, and that the sixth and highest HSK level was in fact equivalent to the fourth CEFR level (B2).
- Hanban provides examples of the exam for the different levels together with the audio for the Listening Test) on the website of <http://www.chinesetest.cn/gosimexam.do>

The HSK consists of a written test and an oral test, which are taken separately:

Level	Vocabulary			Written test			Oral test
	Words (cumulative)	Characters		Listening	Reading	Writing	
		(cumulative / new)					
1	150	178	178	20 questions, 15 min	20 questions, 17 min	Not tested	17 min
	<b>Description: Designed for learners who can understand and use some simple Chinese characters and sentences to communicate, and prepares them for continuing their Chinese studies. In HSK 1 all characters are provided along with Pinyin.</b>						
2	300	349	171	35 questions, 25 min	25 questions, 22 min	Not tested	17 min
	<b>Description: Designed for learners who can use Chinese in a simple and direct manner, applying it in a basic fashion to their daily lives. In HSK 2 all characters are provided along with Pinyin as well.</b>						
3	600	623	274	40 questions	30 questions	10 items	21 min
	<b>Description: Designed for learners who can use Chinese to serve the demands of their personal lives, studies and work, and are capable of completing most of the communicative tasks they experience during their Chinese tour.</b>						
4	1200	1075	452	45 questions	40 questions	15 items	21 min
	<b>Description: Designed for learners who can discuss a relatively wide range of topics in Chinese and are capable of communicating with Chinese speakers at a high standard.</b>						
5	2500	1711	636	45 questions	45 questions	10 items	24 min
	<b>Description: Designed for learners who can read Chinese newspapers and magazines, watch Chinese films and are capable of writing and delivering a lengthy speech in Chinese.</b>						
6	5000	2633	922	50 questions	50 questions	1 composition	24 min
	<b>Description: Designed for learners who can easily understand any information communicated in Chinese and are capable of smoothly expressing themselves in written or oral form.</b>						