

## 2.4 Fourth set

(甚)麼	東西	手機
5+4      3+11	4+4      6+0	4+0      4+12
什 么	东	机
2+2      1+2	1+4	4+2
shénme	dōng	shǒu
what	east	hand
	xī	jī
	west	machine

書包	筆	車子	傘	貴
4+6      2+3	6+6	7+0      3+0	2+10	7+5
书	笔	车	伞	贵
1+3	6+4	4+0	2+4	4+5
shū	bāo	chē	zǐ	sǎn
book	pack; bundle	vehicle	(child)	umbrella
	bǐ			gui
	writing implement			expensive; worthy

字典	行	您
3+3      2+6	6+0	4+7
zì	xíng	nín
character	walk; go; be okay	you [POL]
diǎn		
records		

## Notes

a) Simplification is not a new process; it has been going on since the creation of the writing system. It continues even in the traditional set. The first character of 什麼, for example, is an older simplification of 甚 that substitutes the phonetically

close 十 for the more complicated original, then marks it with rénzìpáng. The 台 of 台北 is another substitution that has gained currency in the traditional font as an alternative for original 臺. Both simplifications have a long history, and have now gained acceptance in Taiwan and traditional communities. Both can now be used in the traditional set.

b) East, in its traditional form (東) shows ‘dawn in the east, with the sun (日) coming up through the trees (木)’. The characters, 東西/东西, suggest that the compound is derived from ‘east-west’, ie the plane of existence, ‘where all things are’. 東 was employed as a phonetic element in 陳, and the relationship remains in the simplified forms: 东/陈.

c) 手 ‘hand’, itself a radical (with a pictographic origin), has a rather different combining form, seen on the left of characters such as 报, 把, 拉, 押. The traditional version of the two graphs (機/机), with its complicated right-hand element, is more suggestive of the meaning ‘machine’. (Cf. 飛機/飞机 feījī ‘airplane’.)

d) 書 consists of 聿 yù ‘a writing implement’ and 日, the latter, distinct from 日. In 筆, 聿 is determined by the element at the top, the bamboo radical (a combining version of 竹 zhú ‘bamboo’); early writing implements were made out of bamboo. 包, whose root meaning is ‘to wrap’ or ‘a bundle’, looks quite like a bundle.

e) *The rule of 5*: characters like 書 (or 筆 bǐ ‘writing implement’ that also contains 聿), which exhibit many horizontal layers are sometimes difficult to resolve. Fortunately, for many such graphs, the RULE OF 5 applies. The rule of 5 states that if the character seems to have a lot of horizontal levels, it has five! Boxes count as one layer; boxes with an internal horizontal (日) count as 2, etc. 書 (as well as 聿, 筆) is an example; so is the left-hand side of nán 難 (the top counts for 2, the box 1 and the lower horizontals, another 2, for a total of 5).

f) The traditional form 車, originally a drawing from overhead of a cart, is itself a radical (appearing in characters such as 輪, 輛, 軟). The graph 子 zǐ (distinct from 字 zì ‘written character’) was originally a drawing of a child. If fully toned, it generally means ‘young; child of; seed of’: 王子 wángzǐ ‘prince (king’s son)’, 天子 tiānzǐ ‘emperor (son of heaven)’, 松子 sōngzǐ ‘pine nut (child of pine)’, 蝦子 xiāzǐ ‘shrimp roe (child of shrimp)’. However, in its untoned form, 子 acts as a noun suffix, appearing with nouns that refer to things from everyday life: 桌子 zhuōzi ‘table’; 椅子 yǐzi ‘chair’; 鼻子 bízi ‘nose’; 板子 bǎnzi ‘spanner; wrench’.

g) 傘/伞 look like umbrellas.

h) 貴/贵 guì ‘expensive’ introduces the important element 貝/贝 bèi, a graph that is said to originate as a drawing of a cowrie shell, used as currency along the southwest coast of China in ancient times. 貝/贝 appears as radical in characters for many word involving transactions, such as 買 mǎi ‘buy’, 賣 mài ‘sell’ and 寶 bǎo ‘valuable’.

i) 字 zì ‘characters’ (‘a child, 子, under a roof, studying characters’). 典 is said to be composed of 册 ‘classic books’ on a stand, suggesting ‘a repository of information’.

j) 行 is its own radical (said to have originated as a picture of crossroads). It generally combines with other elements placed internally, eg 街, 衍. The core meaning of xíng is ‘street; walk’, or by extension, ‘to work (of machines)’, ‘be okay’ etc. The same graph is also used for háng ‘row’, and by extension (via things that are arranged in rows), ‘firm; business’, eg 銀行 yínháng ‘bank (silver-business)’. The word has entered English historical writing, from Cantonese, as *hong*, meaning ‘factory; warehouse’.

### 2.4.1 Compounds

我的伞	她的书	你的笔	手机	书包	什么
wǒ de sǎn	tā de shū	nǐ de bǐ	shǒujī	shūbāo	shénme
东西	车子	字典	行李	您好	行吗
dōngxi	chēzi	zìdiǎn	xíngli	Nín hǎo.	Xíng ma?
谁的书?	没有笔.	上车	贵姓?	不太贵	东西
Shéi de shū?	Méiyǒu bǐ.	shàngchē	Guìxìng?	bú tài guì	dōngxi
什么东西	很贵	车子	姓李	手机不贵	没笔
shénme dōngxi	hěn guì	chēzi	xìng Lǐ	shǒujī bú guì	méi bǐ
很緊張	可是	三個	現在	起來了	走了
hěn jǐnzhāng	kěshì	sān ge	xiànzài	qǐlái le	zǒu le
已經看報了		高老師	現在好了.	還沒起來	不對
yǐjīng kànbào le		Gāo lǎoshī	Xiànzài hǎo le.	hái méi qǐlái	bú duì

## 2.4.2 Set 3 in fántǐzì

看報	以前	現在	在這兒	在報上	起來
kànbào	yǐqián	xiànzài	zài zhèr	zài bào shàng	qǐlái
可是	不對	老高的	緊張	還可以	但是
kěshì	bú duì	lǎo Gāo de	jǐnzhāng	hái kěyǐ	dànshì
三個學生	那樣	在我這兒	走了	昨天的報	不高
sān ge xuéshēng	nèi yàng	zài wǒ zhèr	zǒu le	zuótiān de bào	bù gāo

## 2.4.3 Readings

## a) A Narrative (fántǐzì) with questions

王明是中文老師，有十二個學生。他們已經上課了。中文很難，但是學生都好，都行。今天九月一日，上學第一天。老師學生都很緊張，很忙，也很累。那兒有個學生姓陳，男的。小陳的中文很好。他也是王老師的學生。他今天沒有飯吃，很餓。很餓，上課，不行，對嗎？

## Questions

1. 王明是學生嗎？
2. 老師有二十個學生，對嗎？
3. 他們上班了嗎？
4. 中文怎麼樣？
5. 王老師的學生怎麼樣？
6. 學生緊張嗎？
7. 姓陳的是男的嗎？
8. 小陳的中文怎麼樣？
9. 他是誰的學生？
10. 不吃飯，上課，行不行？

**b) A Dialogue**小马

小张，你好。  
很累，你呢？  
我呢，不饿，我已经吃了。  
还行。好，那，我走了。  
不，今天没课。  
明天见。

小张

小马，你好。今天怎么样？  
我今天也有一点儿累--我没吃饭。你呢？你饿不饿？  
好吃吗？  
上课去(qù 'go')吗？  
好，那，明天见吧。

**Exercise 4.**

Answer the questions below by checking the information in the following table:

第一	手机	高老师的	有一点贵
第二	毛笔	学生的	不太贵
第三	小车子	大学的	有一点儿贵
第四	书包	小李的	不贵
第五	中文字典	周老师的	不贵
第六	伞	李明的	好看，可是不贵
第七	书	小毛的	不贵

**Questions**

1. 第一是什么东西？
2. 第一是谁的？
3. 毛笔贵不贵？
4. 学生有毛笔吗？
5. 小车子很贵，对不对？
6. 小李的东西是什么？
7. 周老师有什么样的字典？
8. 李明的伞怎么样？
9. 有书的姓什么？
10. 您贵姓？你是不是学生？