

Basic Rules for writing Chinese characters

Basic strokes

1. The horizontal stroke is written from left to right.



2. The vertical stroke is written from the top downward.



3. The downward stroke to the left is written from top-right to bottom-left.



4. The downward stroke to the right is written from top-left to bottom-right.



5. The dot is usually written from the top to the bottom-right. Sometimes it is written from the top to the bottom-left.



6. The stroke with a hook: the hook is written by lifting the pen quickly as you approach the end of the hook.



7. The upward stroke to the right is written from bottom-left to top-right.



8. The horizontal stroke with a downward turn is written first from left to right and then downward.



9. The vertical stroke with a horizontal turn to the right is written first from the top downward and then horizontally to the right.



10. The horizontal stroke with a downward turn and hook is written first from left to right, then downward, and finally a turn is made toward the top-left by quickly lifting the pen to make the hook.



11. The vertical stroke with a right turn and a hook is written first from the top downward, then toward the right. Finally, an upward turn is added by quickly lifting the pen to make the hook.



12. The horizontal stroke with a turn to the bottom-left is written first from left to right and then toward the bottom-left.



Basic rules for stroke order

1. A horizontal stroke precedes a vertical stroke or a downward stroke either to the left or to the right.

shí 十: 1) 一 2) 十
tiān 天: 1) 一 2) 二 3) 𠂇 4) 天

2. A downward stroke to the left precedes one to the right.

rén 人: 1) 丿 2) 人
mù 木: 1) 一 2) 十 3) 才 4) 木

3. The strokes are usually written from the top down.

liù 六: 1) 丶 2) 一 3) 六 4) 六
yán 言: 1) 丶 2) 一 3) 讠 4) 言
5) 言 6) 言 7) 言

4. The strokes are usually written from left to right.

ér 儿: 1) 丿 2) 儿
shén 什: 1) 丿 2) 亻 3) 仁 4) 什

5. When strokes are enclosed by another stroke or strokes on the top-right, top-left, or left-top-right sides (that is, with an open bottom), the enclosing strokes usually precede the enclosed strokes.

yīng 应: 1) 丶 2) 一 3) 广 4) 广 5) 广 6) 应
7) 应
xí 习: 1) 习 2) 习 3) 习
tóng 同: 1) 丨 2) 冂 3) 冂 4) 冂 5) 同 6) 同

6. When strokes are enclosed by another stroke or strokes on the bottom-left, or left-bottom-right sides (that is, with an open top), the enclosed strokes usually precede the enclosing strokes.

zhè 这: 1) 丶 2) 一 3) ナ 4) 文 5) 文 6) 这
huà 画: 1) 一 2) 冂 3) 冂 4) 冂 5) 画 6) 画
7) 画 8) 画

7. When strokes are enclosed by other strokes on all four sides, the strokes on the left, top and right sides are written first, then the enclosed strokes, and finally the stroke at the bottom. This is commonly described as “putting everything inside before the door is closed”.

mù 冂: 1) 丨 2) 冂 3) 冂 4) 冂 5) 目
yīn 因: 1) 丨 2) 冂 3) 冂 4) 冂 5) 因 6) 因

8. A vertical stroke in the middle usually precedes strokes on either side.

xiǎo 小: 1) 丨 2) 小 3) 小
shuǐ 水: 1) 丨 2) 丿 3) 水 4) 水

9. If a vertical stroke in the middle crosses other strokes, it is usually written last.

zhōng 中: 1) 丨 2) 冂 3) 口 4) 中
fēng 丰: 1) 一 2) 二 3) 三 4) 丰