

Learning Chinese – NACLO Style

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Problem 1: Chinese Numbers

Several numbers and their (scrambled) squares are written in Chinese below.

四	二百五十六
一百一	一万二百零一
七	十六
一百零一	四十九
十六	一万二千一

1. Determine the correct correspondences.

Translate the following numbers into English.

2. 二万八十七
3. 八百零八

Translate the following numbers into Chinese.

4. 543,210
5. 10,101

Problem 2: Chinese Dialects

The IPA pronunciation of several different Chinese words in different dialects are shown below. The tones are left out.

English	Mandarin	Wu	Xiang	Gan
I	wɔ	ŋu	ŋo	ŋo
you	ni	noŋ	ŋ	ŋ
he	t ^h a	hi	t ^h o	kiɛ
human	ʃən	ŋin	zɛ̃	ŋin
mother	ma ma	ŋiã	m mo	ŋiɔŋ
Sun	t ^h aɪ jɔŋ	ŋiɪ? dɤ	ŋi tɛu	ŋit t ^h ɛu
Moon	ʋə lɔŋ	hyɪ? liã	y liã	ŋiot kuɔŋ

6. The word for *mother* consists of two separate syllables in the Mandarin and Xiang dialects, but only one syllable in the Wu and Gan dialects. Explain how this may have arisen.
7. Describe the most likely geographical configuration of the areas where the dialects Wu, Xiang, and Gan are spoken.
8. Which dialect is the most similar to Mandarin? Which dialect is the most different?

Problem 3: Chinese Food

The Chinese name for some meat dishes and their (scrambled) English translations are shown below.

牛肉丸子	shredded pork
猪扒	Peking duck
煎鸡蛋	fried chicken egg
羊肉串	lamb kebab
肉饺子	sweet and sour chicken
猪肉丝	beef meatball
北京烤鸭	meat dumpling
糖醋鸡	pork chop

Translate the following dishes into English.

9. Sweet and sour duck egg
10. Roast pork dumpling

Translate the following dishes into Chinese.

11. 鸟肉丸子
12. 烤牛扒串

Problem 4: Chinese Time

In switching over to the Western time system, there are now many time units in the Chinese language. Several time values (may not be in *simplest* form) and their (common) equivalents are shown below.

Time Value	Equivalent
三刻三字	一小时
六十分钟	一小时
两刻二十九分钟六十秒	一小时
九时六刻	一天
七时三十刻	一天
三时辰七十五刻	一天
十一时辰七刻十五分钟	一天

13. What is the relationship between 时 and 刻?

Translate in all possible ways the following times into their (common) equivalents.

14. 十时十分钟
15. 两时辰两刻两分钟两秒
16. 四时十刻
17. 四时辰十刻

Problem 5: Chinese Characters

Many Chinese characters are formed from combining other characters with radicals. Here is a list of characters, their pronunciations (in *pīnyīn*), and their translations.

Character	Pīnyīn	Translation
冰	bīng	ice
踢	tī	kick
热	rè	warm
雹	báo	hail
他	tā	he/him
妈	mā	mom
冷	lěng	cold
雪	xuě	snow
烤	kǎo	roast
汽	qì	steam
间	jiān	room
打	dǎ	hit
裤	kù	pants
水	shuǐ	
	mén	door
	yǔ	rain
	mǎ	horse
火	huǒ	
衣	yī	
	kǎo	test
	rén	person
		she/her
气		

18. Fill in the gaps.

Note: some characters are usually paired with another for the full meaning, but for the problem's sake, they are left out here.

Solutions:

1. C, E, D, B, A
2. 20,087
3. 808
4. 五十四万三千二百十
5. 一万一百零一
6. There may have originally been two words that could be used for *mother*, but in different dialects, the different words were favored, leading to the dichotomy seen today.
7. The region where Gan is spoken is most likely in between the regions where Wu and Xiang are spoken.
8. Xiang is the most similar dialect. Wu is the most different.
9. 糖醋鸭蛋
10. 烤猪肉饺子
11. bird meatball
12. roast beef chop kebab
13. One 时 always equals ten 刻.
14. 一天一小时十分钟, 一天十分钟
15. 四小时三十二分钟两秒
16. 十二小时, 十二小时三十分
17. 十小时三十分
- 18.

Character	Pīnyīn	Translation
水	shuǐ	water
门	mén	door
雨	yǔ	rain
马	mǎ	horse
火	huǒ	fire
衣	yī	clothes
考	kǎo	test
人	rén	person
她	tā	she/her
气	qì	air