



Let's Look at China

through stamps



让我们透过邮票看中国





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Translation notes:

让我们透过邮票看中国 Ràng wǒmen tòuguò yóupiào kàn Zhōngguó.

Literally translated as: Let us, by means of postage stamps, look at China.

邮票 yóupiào - postage stamp

中国 Zhōngguó - China

You can find out more information about all the stamps featured in this pack on StampIT's website – scottishphilately.co.uk/moodle

Sound files for the Mandarin Chinese words are available on the website with many thanks to Li Tinglan, MSc foreign language student, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu.

This pack is supported by
South Ayrshire Confucius Classroom and the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools

StampIT is supported by



The giant panda

One of the most popular Chinese animals is the giant panda and everyone knows that giant pandas are black and white but they also have some brown fur, usually around the tummy area.



And, there is a brown and white giant panda! It is only found in the Qínling mountains, Shaanxi.

Qínling giant panda
Qín líng dà xióng māo
秦岭大熊猫



Another interesting fact is that there are two Shanxi provinces in China:

山西 shānxī and 陕西 shǎnxī

Notice the characters are different and the words are pronounced with different tones.

陕西 shǎnxī is often written as Shaanxi in English.

Use an atlas to find Shaanxi and Shanxi. Colour the areas in the map of China below.



Chinese brush painting



Chinese brush painting is an art using a brush dipped in black or coloured inks. Different strokes and textures can be made by holding the brush at different angles and adding more or less water to the inks. There are many brush paintings of bamboo which is the giant panda's favourite food.

Create a picture in Chinese brush painting style.

Tigers

One of the most endangered animals in China is the tiger. There is actually only one species of tiger but there are 6 different subspecies. Only 3 of the subspecies can be found in China.

Find out the names of all 6 subspecies of tiger and the 3 that can be found in China.

The main reason that tigers are endangered is because of TCMs.

Find out what TCM stands for and why this affects tigers.

On this tiger stamp it says – *Panthera tigris altaica* which is the scientific name.

What is the common name for this subspecies of tiger?



Golden monkey



This monkey is known as the golden snub-nosed monkey but the Chinese have a more beautiful name for it:

jīn sī hóu
金丝猴
golden silk monkey

One of the areas it is found in is the 秦岭 mountains. This area was mentioned on the giant panda page.

Look again at the giant panda page, find the characters and write the name in English

Kites

The Chinese invented the kite. The first kites were made of wood and cloth and were usually in the shape of birds. The full set of these Chinese stamps show one in the shape of a hawk, a phoenix (an imaginary bird), a dragon and one showing the Chinese eight diagrams.



The Chinese eight diagrams link to the sky, marsh, fire, thunder, wind, water, mountains and earth.

heaven/sky	marsh	fire	thunder	wind	water	mountain	earth
tiān	zé	huǒ	léi	fēng	shuǐ	shān	dì
天	泽	火	雷	风	水	山	地
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Do you know your Chinese numbers?

Write the correct characters in the boxes. The characters are given below but they are mixed up!

四 七 一 三 六 八 五 二

Sport



This set of stamps was issued in 2006 in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The design is a very simple 'stickman' style but still manages to show the sports for basketball, fencing, sailing and gymnastics. **Choose a different sport and design a 'stickman' to show the sport.**

Dragons

The Chinese dragon is a legendary animal. It is a symbol of power, strength and good luck.



The Chinese Calendar and Zodiac

The Chinese 60-year calendar cycle was based on a combination of 10 'heavenly stems' and 12 'earthly branches'. Each year was given a name with a stem and a branch. There are also twelve animals linked to the years. The red Chinese characters on the dragon stamp above are

rén chén nián

壬辰年

壬 is 9th of the 10 heavenly stems 辰 is 5th of the 12 earthly branches 年 means year.

Look closely at the chart on the next page. You may need a magnifying glass!

Find the **only** slot where 壬 appears in red and 辰 appears in blue **exactly** under it.

You should find that it is slot **number 29**. This means it is the 29th year of the cycle.

Then look at the animal for that slot. The animal for that year is the dragon.

Important notes when using the chart:

- There are 10 red characters, which are the heavenly stems, repeated around the outer circle.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
甲	乙	丙	丁	戊	己	庚	辛	壬	癸

- There are 12 blue characters, which are the earthly branches, repeated around the inner circle.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
子	丑	寅	卯	辰	巳	午	未	申	酉	戌	亥

Note about fonts

壬辰 and 壬辰 are the same. They are written in a different font (a type of lettering). The chart has been written in this 'square' font to make it easier to see the shape of the characters.

Here are some examples of different fonts:

dragon

dragon

dragon

Chinese characters can also be written in different fonts:

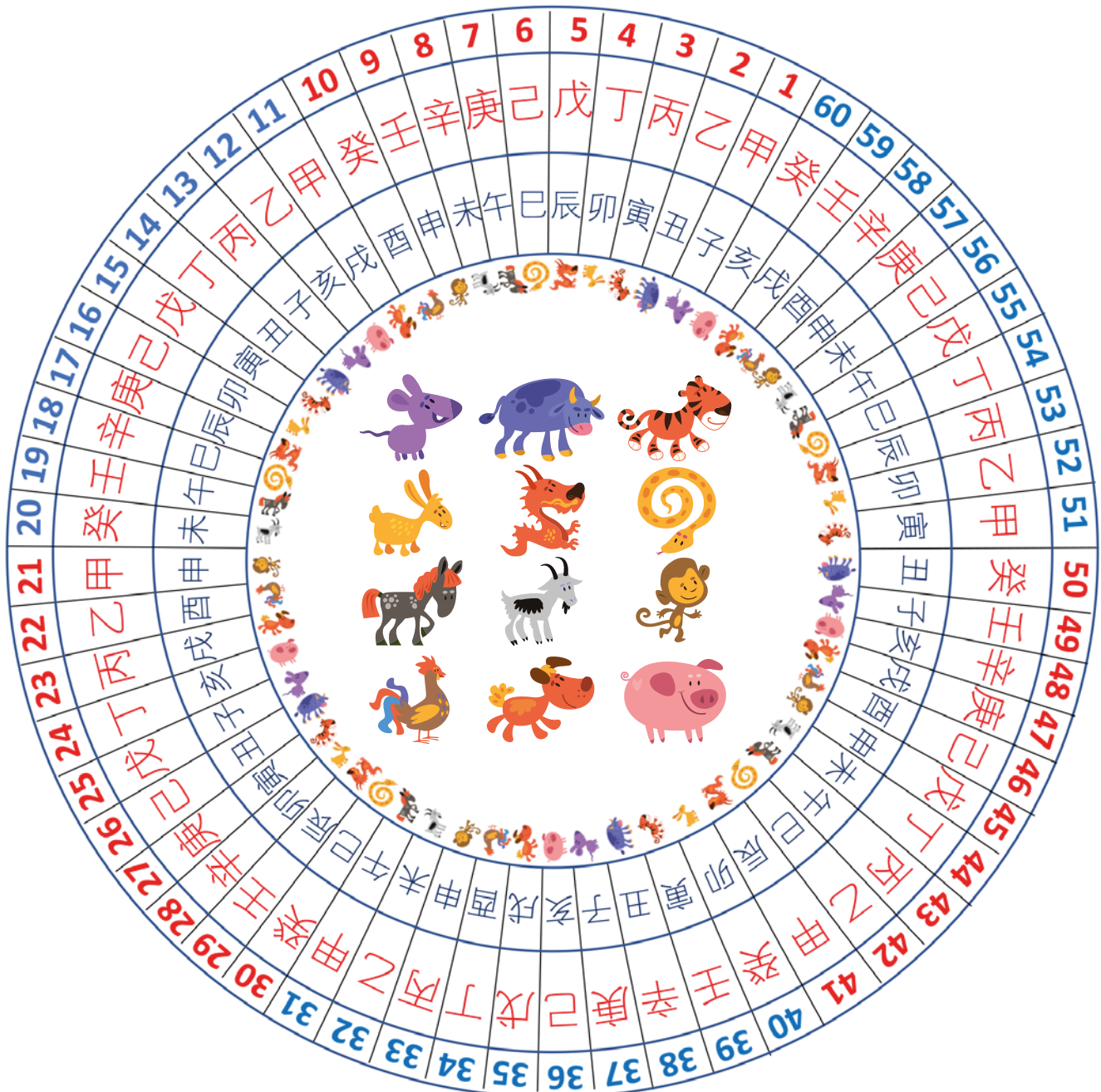
龙

龙

龙

Find 戊申 wùshēn. **Complete the following sentences:**

戊申 is the _____ year of the 60 year cycle. The animal for that year is the _____.



Chinese characters

You have already come across quite a few Chinese characters in this book. This is the Chinese writing system. It has been around for over 4000 years but the characters have changed over time. The early Chinese characters were simple drawings of objects and pictures of ideas. To correctly write Chinese characters, the strokes have to be written in the correct order. Square grids help you to learn to write the characters.



Practise writing these simple characters in the grids below following the stroke order:

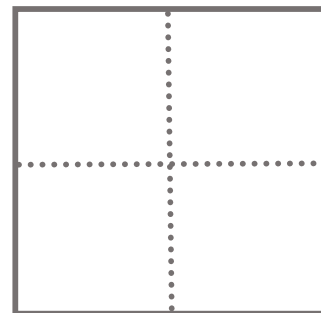
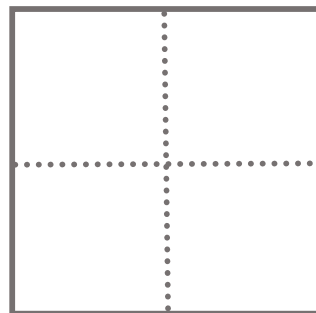
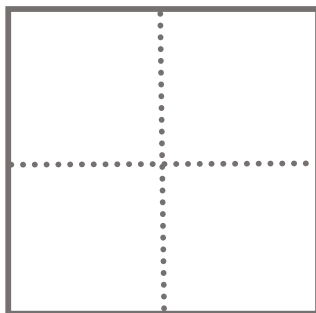
big dà



small xiǎo



middle zhōng



Mandarin language

The Mandarin language is the official language of China. There are other Chinese languages that also use the Chinese characters for writing but are spoken differently.

There are sound files in Mandarin on the StampIT website with the words used in this book. **Listen to them and try to repeat.**

What is the meaning of the character on this stamp?



The Chinese flag & Colours

The Chinese flag is red and yellow.

In China, the colour red is linked to luck, joy and happiness.

Red is always used in festivals.

Yellow was the emperor's colour. Palaces and temples were often decorated in yellow and gold.

Yellow also represents bravery in China. The hero in a Chinese opera will often have a yellow mask and robes.



Do you link colours with emotions? How many traditional sayings can you think of that link a colour to an emotion?

(Example – I was tickled pink!)

Find out the Mandarin words for red, yellow, blue, green, pink and white.

Huanglong Valley



This stamp shows a waterfall in a place called Huánglóng Valley in northwest Sìchuān province. Use an atlas to find Sìchuān and colour that area in the map of China below.

Huáng lóng
黃 龍
yellow dragon

Sì chuān
四 川
4 rivers



The Silk Road

China discovered how to make silk. The thread is from the cocoons of the silkworm. The silkworm isn't a worm but a moth, which starts life as a caterpillar and then weaves itself into a cocoon to transform into a moth.

China managed to keep the secret of making silk for many years. Merchants traded with other countries and the route they took became known as the silk route or the silk road.

Look closely at the stamps below. You may need a magnifying glass.



Which method of transport do you think the merchants took?

Think about how they could travel over a large area of desert with many goods.

The word for silk is 丝绸 sīchóu. The character 丝 sī has appeared before in this book.

Where and why was silk mentioned before?

The Great Wall of China



Find out about the Great Wall and try to answer these questions:

What length is the Great Wall?

- A. The Great Wall is exactly 2,100km long.
- B. All known parts of the Great Wall measure just over 21,000km.
- C. No one has managed to measure the wall.

When was the Great Wall built?

- A. The Great Wall was all built in the year 221 BC.
- B. The Great Wall is still being built today.
- C. Parts of the wall were built from as early as the 7th century, then later joined together and continued to be added to, up until about 1633.

The Terracotta Army

The Terracotta Army is an amazing collection of life size terracotta warriors and horses which were found in the burial ground of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China.

There are about 8000 warriors, 100 chariots, 400 horses and more than 100,000 weapons found so far.

Terracotta is a type of clay. It took thousands of men many years to make the army and they must have used an awful lot of clay.

Use any modelling clay or plasticine and make at least two small terracotta warriors.

When you make them, make sure that each one looks different. The real terracotta clay models all had different hair, faces and clothing.



Forks and chopsticks

Look closely at the two stamps below.

Write in the table below the names of the items you can see on the stamps and place them in the correct column to show the country they are from.



China	Scotland

Try to think of some Chinese foods and write them below:

Fun with stamps

1. StampART

Make art from stamps. Either make a collage using stamps or take one stamp and create a picture around the stamp using the theme of the stamp to inspire you.



2. StampPAGE

Using stamps, create a decorative stamp page. This page can also include some written information.



3. Stampy cut-out

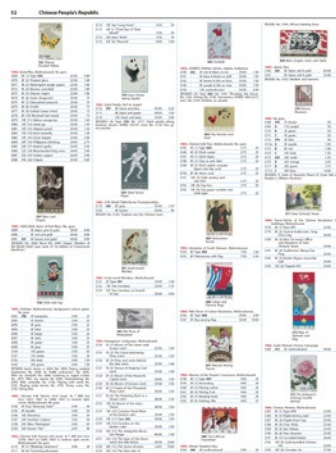
Draw and cut-out a design, then choose a related stamp to stick onto the design.



4. Finding out more about a stamp

Use a catalogue to find out more about a stamp:

- What is on the stamp?
- When was the stamp issued?
- Why was the stamp issued?



To find out how to use a catalogue for some Chinese stamps, go to StampIT's website: 'Let's Look at China' catalogue quiz.

You may also want to read 'What's it worth?' in the Stampy things section.

China Stamp game - How to Play

Play the game after you have completed all the sections of this book.

China stamp gameboard

Category placement board

16 x China stamp question cards

You will also need:

dice

counter

Try to play without looking at this book and see how much you remember from the book activities.

- Start on any stamp on the gameboard.
- Take the question card related to that stamp. Try to answer the question.
- Once answered decide which category the question fits into: animal, sport, food, history, culture or language.
- Place the card on the correct category. The categories are only written in Chinese. See below for translations.
- Roll a dice to move around the gameboard to a different stamp. Answer the questions and place on the correct categories.
- Continue until you have answered all 16 questions.
- When you land on a stamp that you have already answered, roll again.

dòng wù
动物

animal - 动 dòng means 'to move' and 物 wù means 'thing' (*moving thing*)

yùn dòng
运动

sport - 运 yùn means 'to use/move' and 动 dòng means 'to move' (*using movement*)

fàn cài
饭菜

food - 饭 fàn means 'cooked rice/meal' and 菜 cài means 'type of food/cuisine'

lì shǐ
历史

history - 历 lì means 'to experience' and 史 shǐ means 'history'

wén huà
文化

culture - 文 wén means 'language/culture' and 化 huà means 'to make into'

zhōng wén
中文

Chinese language - 中 zhōng means 'middle' but here it is short for China 中国 and 文 wén means 'language'



Within stamps lies an entire world of language and culture

StampIT is the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies youth programme where children can discover a world of stamps through interactive games and activities.

StampIT also provides a number of ideas for teachers to use stamps across the curriculum. Stamps are a great medium for learning about a wide range of subjects including arts, music, history, geography, science, sport, culture and languages.

StampIT is also supported by Stamp Active and the Scottish Philatelic Trade Association.

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