

# Calligraphy in Everyday China





**Chinese writing, calligraphy, can be found everywhere in China, from the ancient drums in a drum tower to the label on a bottle of Coke on the dinner table.**



**Chinese writing is made up of characters that stand for words. Some words contain more than one character.**

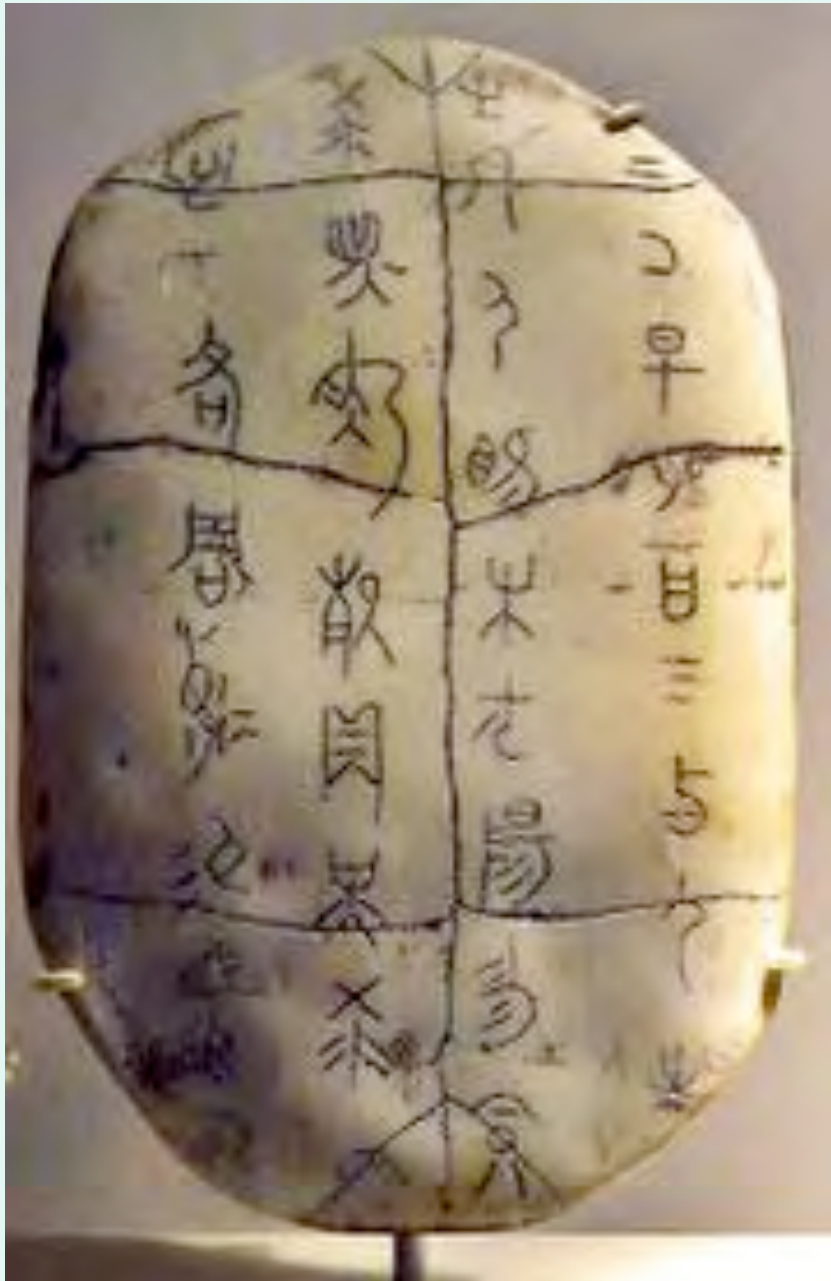
**The earliest calligraphy was a pictograph that mimicked the shape of the word it represented. Here is the ancient character for “mountain” and the modern character for the same word.**



**Pictograph**



**Modern Character**



- Ancient pictographs were written on oracle bones. An oracle bone was a piece of bone or turtle shell with writing on it.
- Why did people use bone to write on?
- The Chinese hadn't invented paper yet!

Here are more pictographs and the modern characters that people use now.

How are they the same?

How are they different?

### Sheep



Pictograph



Modern

### Water



Pictograph



Modern

### Rain



Pictograph



Modern

Sun



Moon



Human



Eye



**Bird**



鳥

**Tortoise**



龜

**Chinese Dragon**



龍

**Horse**



馬

**Can you find the Chinese Calligraphy in these pictures? If you can't read the characters, can you make a good guess of what they may say or be about?**







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天然辐射最低的地方

The Place of the Least Quantity of Natural Radiation

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Dragon Palace National Scenic Spot

# How can you learn more about Chinese calligraphy?

These children's books use Chinese calligraphy to tell a story while telling more about calligraphy. You can find them at the library or at a book store.



*Liu and the Bird*

**A Journey in Chinese Calligraphy**

**By Catherine Louis**



*Voices of the Heart*

**By Ed Young**

**Louis, Catherine. Liu and the Bird: a Journey in Chinese Calligraphy. New York: North-South Books, 2006. A children's story based on calligraphy from oracle bone script to modern characters.**

**Wikipedia Contributors. "Oracle Bone." Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2004. 20 Nov. 2007**

**<[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oracle\\_bones&oldid=16322405](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oracle_bones&oldid=16322405)>. The picture of the oracle bone replica on slide 5 was found here.**

**Wikipedia Contributors. "Chinese Character." Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2003. 20 Nov. 2007 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chinese\\_characters&oldid=16036112](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chinese_characters&oldid=16036112)>. The complete chart of calligraphy scripts from ancient times to the present as seen (in part) in slides 4, 6, 7, and 8 can be found here.**