

*Language of Stamps*  
*Mandarin Chinese*



# Language of Stamps

## Background

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

StampIT provides a number of ideas for teachers to use stamps across the curriculum. In particular, 'Language of Stamps' is a series of resources for studying language and culture.

The 'Language of Stamps' resources are available to download free of charge from the ASPS website – **[scottishphilately.co.uk/youth](http://scottishphilately.co.uk/youth)**

StampIT is part of ASPS which is a voluntary, not for profit organisation. The Development Officer works on a voluntary basis developing and delivering the outreach and resources.

## Mandarin Chinese resources

The China stamp game is a an information and activity game using Chinese postage stamps to learn about China's culture and the Chinese characters.

Through the images on the stamps, this game provides an insight into the etymology of the Chinese characters (*the study of their origin and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history*). It provides a deeper understanding behind the characters, the original pictograms, ideograms and phonograms where one part of the character links to the sound.

## Digital content

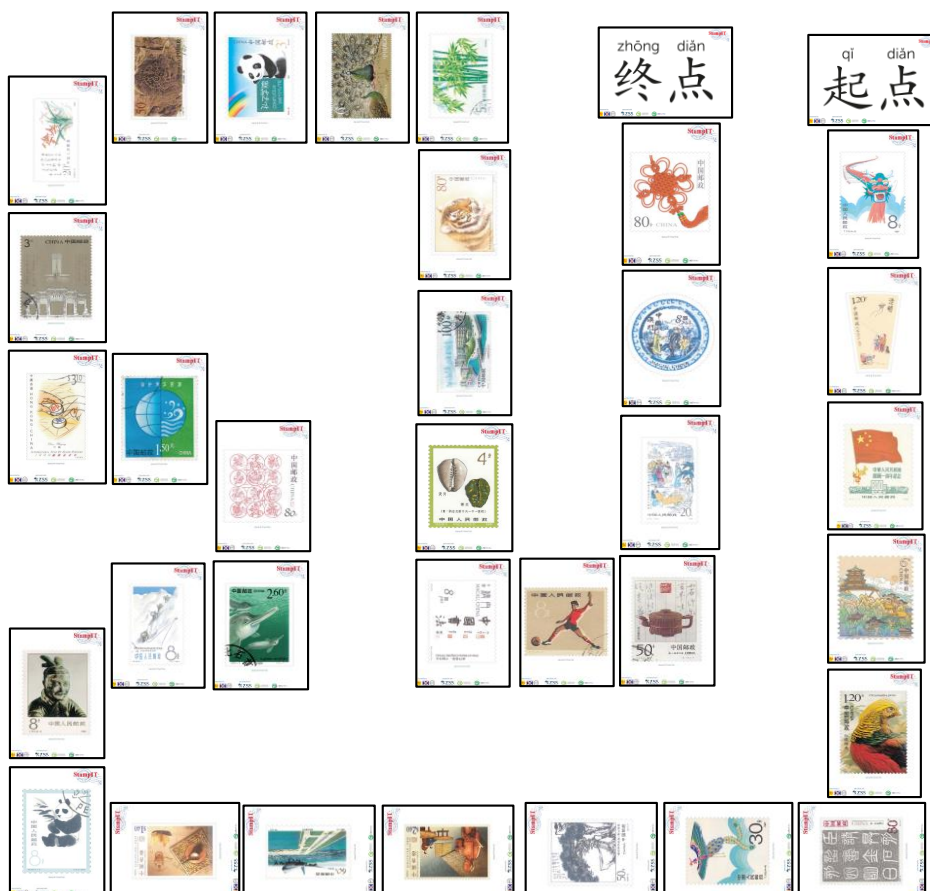
- Language of Stamps – Mandarin Chinese
- Chinese stamp cards – 33 cards
- Start, finish and instruction cards – 3 cards



# The China stamp game

**Suggestions on how to use the information and activity cards:**

1. **Class or individual activity:** Mix the cards and place face down. Pick one of the cards at random, read the information and do one or more of the suggested activities.
2. **Class activity:** deal a card out to all pupils (there are 33 cards in total). Each pupil reads their card and does one or more of the suggested activities. This is ideal for a homework project. Each pupil can share the information they learned with the rest of the class.
3. **Class or group game:** *requires counters and dice.* Lay out the cards face down on the floor in a game board style – see suggestion below. Place the start 起点 (qǐ diǎn) and finish 终点 (zhōng diǎn) cards at either end. You will need some items to use as large coloured counters. Roll a dice and move the number of places. Turn over the card when landed on. Read the information and do one or more of the suggested activities. Continue play until every card has been landed on or until time allows. Pass over cards that have already been turned over.



# The China stamp game

## Suggested answers and additional information:

Answers are not provided for the challenges which state – ‘*find out about...*’  
It is expected that the pupils will research and find out more about these subjects.

### Kite:

fēng zheng

风 筝

The character 风 fēng is shown on the card. The character 筝 zhēng is the Chinese zither also known as 古筝 gǔzheng meaning ancient zheng.

### The Summer Palace:

yí hé yuán

颐和园

The character 园 yuán is shown on the card. The character 和 hé is detailed on the Zhèng Hé card. The character 颐 yí means to nourish or preserve.

### Golden pheasant:

hóng fù jīn jī

红腹锦鸡

The other colours on the golden pheasant are:

red	红色	hóngsè
yellow	黄色	huángsè
green	绿色	lǜsè
orange	橙色	chéngsè
brown	棕色	zōngsè

### Phoenix:

fèng huáng

凤凰

Both characters 凤 fèng and 凰 huáng mean phoenix and the two characters are put together to form the word. There are some other Chinese words which take this pattern.

### Terracota army:

bīng mǎ yǒng

兵马俑

The character 马 mǎ is shown on the card. The character 兵 bīng means soldiers and the character 俑 yǒng means ‘wooden figures buried with the dead’.

# The China stamp game

## Suggested answers and additional information: (continued)

### Mount Gongga:

gòng gā shān

贡嘎山

The character 山shān is shown on the card. The characters 贡嘎gònggā give the name of the mountain in the Gongga county, Tibet.

[贡gong also means to offer tribute or gifts and嘎gá or gā means a cackling sound.]

### White river dolphin:

bái jì tún

白暨豚

The character 白bái is shown on the card. The character 暨jì is another word for 'and'.

The character 豚tún means dolphin. Therefore literally the name is 'white and dolphin'.

Black and white:

black

黑色

hēisè

white

白色

báisè

### Zodiac:

sheng xiào

生肖

The zodiac animals are:

rat

鼠

shǔ

ox

牛

niú

tiger

虎

hǔ

rabbit

兔

tù

dragon

龙

lóng

snake

蛇

shé

horse

马

mǎ

goat or sheep

羊

yáng

monkey

猴

hóu

rooster

鸡

jī

dog

狗

gǒu

pig

猪

zhū

# The China stamp game

## Suggested answers and additional information: (continued)

### Confucius:

Kǒng zǐ

孔子

### Some famous Confucius quotes:

*'Everything has beauty but not everyone sees it.'*

*'It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop'*

*'Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but rising every time we fall.'*

*'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.'*

*'Life is really simple but we insist on making it complicated.'*

*'Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.'*

*'The journey of a 1000 miles begins with one step.'*

*'The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.'*

*'He who knows all the answers has not been asked all the questions.'*

*'Give a bowl of rice to a man and you will feed him for a day. Teach him how to grow his own rice and you will save his life.'*

*'If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.'*

### Confucius Institute:

Kǒng zǐ xué yuàn

孔子学院

The character 学 xué is shown on the card. The characters 孔子 Kǒngzǐ are detailed on the Confucius card. The character 院 yuàn means institution. The character 阝 usually means walls or hill/mound when on the left and city when on the right. It is on the left in yuàn and is the meaning part of the character – an area surrounded by walls. The character 完 links to the sound part – wán.

An example of 阝 on the right is 都 dū meaning city (Chéngdū 成都). Although also note that the same character 都 but with different pronunciation dōu means all/both.

There are many characters where 阝 has lost its meaning, for example: 那 nà – that 哪 nǎ – which/where.

It appears in a character that is on the stamps 邮 yóu meaning post.

中国邮政 zhōngguó yóuzhèng meaning Chinese postal service.

A postage stamp is 邮票 yóupiào.

Beyond the Panda is the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's China and giant panda education programme and manages the first science specialist Confucius Classroom in the world. For further resources on China, Chinese language and giant pandas, please see [beyondthepanda.org.uk](http://beyondthepanda.org.uk)

# The China stamp game

## Suggested answers and additional information: (continued)

### Football:

zú qiú

足球

### Some other sports:

football	足球	zúqiú
basketball	篮球	lánqiú
tennis	网球	wǎngqiú
table tennis	乒乓球	pīngpāngqiú
badminton	羽毛球	yǔmáoqiú
volleyball	排球	páiqiú
rugby	橄榄球	gǎnlǎnqiú

足	foot
篮	basket
网	net
乒乓	ping-pong
羽毛	feather
排	row or line
橄榄	olive

(because ball looks like a Chinese olive)

### Zheng He:

zhèng hé

郑和

The character 和hé is shown on the card. The character 郑zhèng means the Zheng state during the Warring States period and is also a common surname.

### Willow tree porcelain:

liǔ shù cí qì

柳树瓷器

The character 树shù is shown on the card. The character 柳liǔ means willow. Note that it contains the character for wood/tree 木. The characters 瓷器cíqì mean porcelain. The first character 瓷cí means porcelain or chinaware.

The second character 器qì means a vessel or utensil and has an interesting history. This character is made up from four mouths 口 and a character meaning dog 犬. An ancient character shows a form of a hand and four pots. Another later version has four mouths with the character for work 工 in the centre and that would create the meaning 'a collection of work vessels for many mouths'. However along the way the character for work has been replaced by dog. Maybe you can remember this character as the vessels for many mouths and the dog that cleans them!

器 器 器

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