



Lesson1.3

Basic differences between Chinese and English-2

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Chinese vs English: Overview

- ▶ **Different language families:**
- ▶ **English:** Indo-European language family
- ▶ **Chinese:** Sino-Tibetan language family

- ▶ **Sino-Tibetan Language: Some Basic Features**
 - The Sino-Tibetan languages have in common several features, which are exhibited to a greater or lesser extent in the individual tongues. For example, they show a tendency to be **monosyllabic** and isolating and to use **tones** or musical pitch.
 - In an isolating language the **words do not change their form** or show inflection. Because of the relative absence of inflection, **word order** is the key to expressing grammatical relationships.

- <https://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/arts/language/linguistics/sinotibetan-languages/common-features>



Chinese vs English: Overview

- ▶ English: Alphabets
- ▶ Chinese: Ideographic characters
- ▶ Because some Chinese characters derive from attempts to represent objects pictorially, they are sometimes called 'pictograms/ ideograms'. However, changes in the form of graphs brought about by processes of standardization and writing reform over the centuries have generally obscured any representational origins.



Chinese vs English: Overview

- ▶ **Different nature of language:**
- ▶ **Chinese:** analytic language
- ▶ **English:** comprehensive language

- ▶ **Analytic language:** the relationship of words is expressed not by the form of word itself – but by **prepositions and word order** and so on.
- ▶ E.g. 我吃过饭了。

- ▶ **Comprehensive language:** the meaning of the language is expressed by the change of **the form of the word itself** such as case, number, tense and so on.
- ▶ E.g. I've had dinner.