

8

Unit

Culture and tradition



Chinese culture is one of the world's oldest cultures. It is diverse and unique, yet harmoniously blended – an invaluable asset to the world. This unit covers the most glorious aspects of Chinese culture, such as architecture, ink and wash paintings, martial arts, opera, and traditional medicine.

Which aspect of Chinese culture fascinates foreign visitors most? What intrigues foreign scholars' interest in Chinese culture? Has Chinese kung fu been well accepted by foreigners? In this unit, you will taste the essence of Chinese culture and find inspiration for these questions.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- know more about Chinese culture
- predict the content of a text
- pause properly after each sense group to make your English more natural
- tell stories of Chinese artists to international students

Warming up

Work in pairs. Look at the pictures and discuss the following questions.

- 1 Have you done any of these activities in the past three months? If yes, what are they?
- 2 Which activity would you like to try in the next few months? Why?



Going to a Chinese painting exhibition



Performing tai chi



Watching a Chinese opera

iExplore 1: Listening and speaking

Conversation

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

jade /dʒeɪd/ *n.* 碧玉; 翡翠
crane /kreɪn/ *n.* 鹤

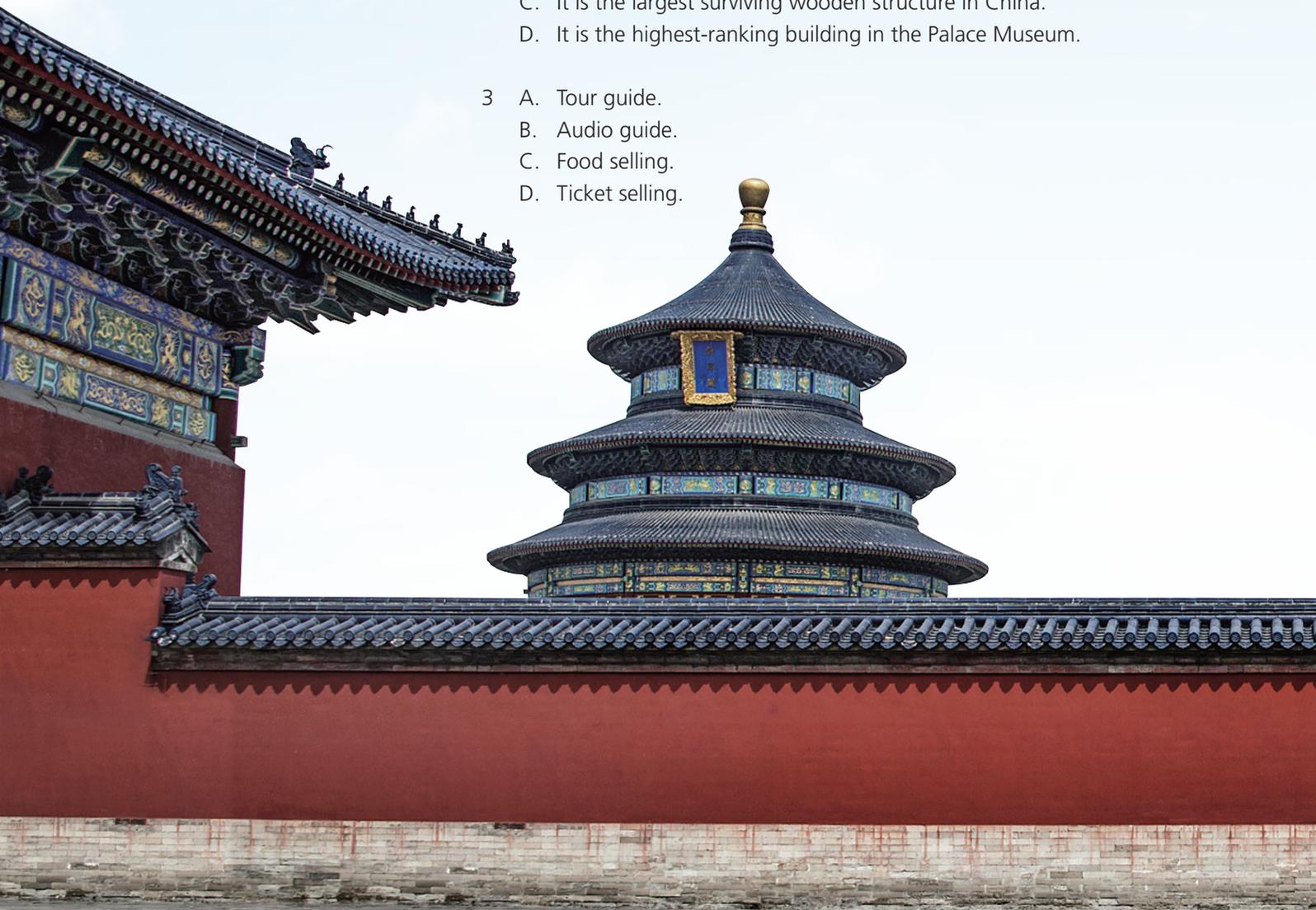
PROPER NAMES

the Palace /'pæləs/ Museum
故宫博物院 (北京)
the Hall of Supreme Harmony /sʊ'pri:m/
Harmony /'hɑ:məni/ 太和殿
(故宫三大殿之一)

Listening and understanding

1 The Palace Museum is famous for its architecture and imperial collections. By visiting the Palace Museum, you can experience Chinese culture along with its history. Now listen to a conversation and choose the best answer to each of the questions you hear.

- 1 A. Jade Ruyi.
B. Paintings of pines.
C. Paintings of cranes.
D. Architecture models.
- 2 A. It sits in the center of the Palace Museum.
B. It is the oldest building in the Palace Museum.
C. It is the largest surviving wooden structure in China.
D. It is the highest-ranking building in the Palace Museum.
- 3 A. Tour guide.
B. Audio guide.
C. Food selling.
D. Ticket selling.



- 2 Listen to the conversation again and write down the expressions used by the woman to respond to what the man had just said. The first one has been done for you.

Statements	Responses
But I don't quite understand the meaning of the designs on the Jade Ruyi.	1) <u>I think I can explain</u> _____.
That's really interesting.	2) _____.
That's awesome.	3) _____.
That really fascinates me.	4) _____, that really makes things a lot easier.



Passage

Listening and understanding

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

ink and wash painting *n.* 水墨画
shrimp /ʃrɪmp/ *n.* 虾

PROPER NAMES

Pablo Picasso /,pɑːvɪsɔː
pɪˈkɑːsəʊ/ 巴勃罗·毕加索 (西
班牙画家和雕刻家)

LISTENING SKILLS

Predicting the content of a text

Predicting the content of a text is an activity we usually carry out before doing listening exercises. Our knowledge of the world helps us anticipate the information we are likely to hear. When we predict the topic of the text, all the related knowledge stored in our brains is “activated” to help us better understand what we’re listening to.

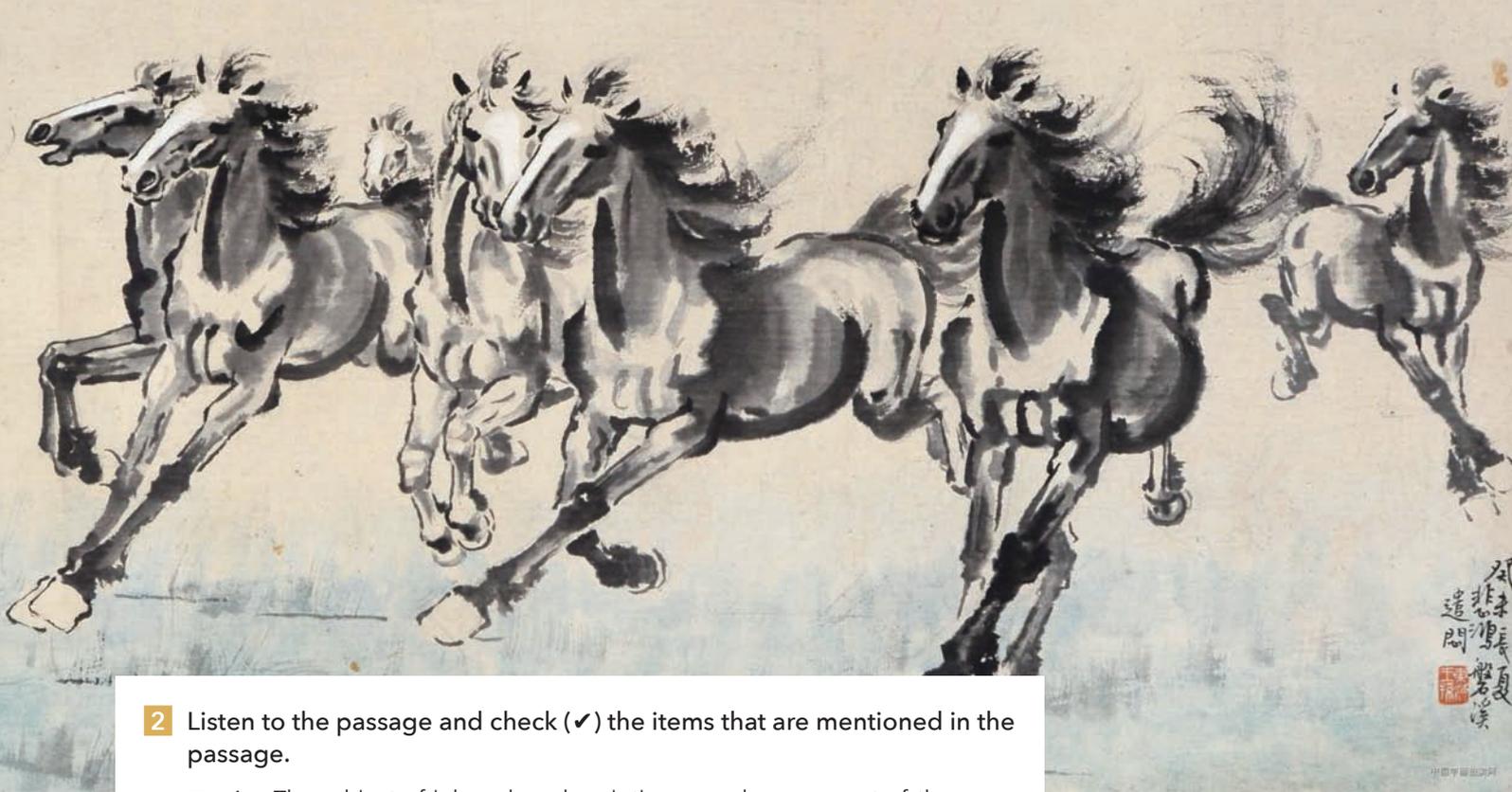
To better predict, we could quickly

- look at the pictures or headings. (What information do they give us about the topic?)
- look at the questions and choices. (What clues can these questions and choices give about the topic? Which aspects of the topic will be discussed?)
- think about the vocabulary we know about the topic. Predict which words might appear in the listening.

1 Predicting will be helpful to the understanding of the passage. Look at the picture and discuss the following questions.

- 1 In your opinion, what is the passage about?
- 2 Who will appear in your mind when you first come across the painting?
- 3 What words do you expect to hear in this passage?





2 Listen to the passage and check (✓) the items that are mentioned in the passage.

- 1 The subject of ink and wash paintings may become part of the identity of the painter.
- 2 Zhang Daqian is one of China's most celebrated modern master artists.
- 3 Horses are part of the identity of Xu Beihong.
- 4 In his 60s, Qi Baishi created his own style of painting ink and wash shrimps.
- 5 The influence of Qi Baishi's paintings goes beyond the nation.

3 Listen to the passage again and fill in the blanks with what you hear.

- 1 Whenever people see an ink and wash painting of _____, they are most likely to think of Qi Baishi.
- 2 For years, Qi repeatedly copied the shrimp paintings of earlier masters and later he began to develop his own _____ and styles.
- 3 Qi believed in the theory that paintings must be something between _____ and unlikeness.

Thinking and speaking

4 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1 It is mentioned in the passage that the subject of the paintings may become part of the identity of the painter. Do you know any other painters who can also be identified with their painting subject?
- 2 Can you use examples to illustrate the theory that paintings must be something between likeness and unlikeness?
- 3 Which style of painting do you like better, painting something between likeness and unlikeness, or painting something as it is?

iExplore 2: Viewing and speaking



Viewing and understanding

- 1 The Twenty-four Solar Terms (*Jie Qi*) is the wisdom of our ancestors and carries our cultural identity. Now watch a video clip and match each *Jie Qi* in Column A with people's activities in Column B.

Column A

- 1 Beginning of Summer
- 2 Fresh Green
- 3 Winter Solstice

Column B

- a. People go hiking and have outings, and remember their ancestors.
- b. Southerners eat glue puddings, while northerners eat dumplings.
- c. Banshan people hold traditional activities to keep fit such as eating black sticky rice and climbing mountains.

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

ethnic /'eθnik/ group *n.* 族群

ritual /'ritʃuəl/ *a.* 作为仪式一部分的

rhythm /'rɪðəm/ *n.* 有规律的模式

deed /di:d/ *n.* 行为



春



夏



秋



冬

2 Watch the video clip again and fill in the blanks with what you hear.

- 1 The Twenty-four Solar Terms is a _____ system through which the Chinese people attempt to understand the _____ and how they relate to the natural world.
- 2 This tradition has touched almost every _____ of Chinese people's lives. When a specific _____ begins, people arrange farming and daily life according to that solar term's _____.
- 3 This thinking encourages Chinese _____ for the laws of nature and the rhythm of life. It also creates the ideal of social life featuring _____ with an emphasis on harmony.

Thinking and speaking

3 Work in groups and discuss the following questions.

- 1 The speaker introduces several specific solar terms and people's respective ritual practices and folk activities. To what extent have you followed such practices and activities?
- 2 The Twenty-four Solar Terms has been regarded as the Fifth Great Invention of China. As far as you are concerned, which are the most meaningful solar terms?

iPractice: Pronunciation

Sense groups

When we speak in English, we usually use sense groups. Sense groups are groups of words that form an idea or a thought. They are marked by very small pauses. A sense group can be a word, an expression, a phrase, or a clause. Using sense groups, you may make your pronunciation smoother and improve your listening comprehension.

For example:

- 1 Shrimps / have been the favorite subject / of Qi's paintings / for decades.
- 2 In recent years, / the art / has become popular / internationally.

1 Listen to the following sentences and pay attention to the sense groups. Then take turns reading them to a partner.

- 1 I enjoyed the collections / and architecture there / very much.
- 2 It is also the largest / surviving wooden structure / in China.
- 3 Qi's paintings / are popular / not only in China, / but also / in other parts of the world.
- 4 Cultural exchange / plays a significant role / in China-US relations.

2 Read the following sentences and mark the sense groups with (/). Then listen to the sentences and check your answers.

- 1 The designs on the Jade Ruyi usually include an old man, cranes, pines, and deer.
- 2 For years, Qi repeatedly copied the shrimp paintings of earlier masters.
- 3 We hope today's performance will let more people in the US know about Chinese kung fu and Chinese culture.
- 4 One of the features of the opera is "face-changing."

Unit project

Presenting an artist

Introducing a Chinese artist's story at a cultural festival

Your university planned to hold a cultural festival to introduce Chinese culture to international students. Your class is responsible for the art section and needs to introduce three Chinese artists. Your group needs to choose one Chinese artist and present their story to the class. Finally, the whole class will decide which three artists will be presented at the festival. The following steps may help you with the project.





Step 1 Choose one Chinese artist

Think of a Chinese artist your group members are interested in and of whom your audience wants to learn more about. The following list may give you some ideas.

- Qi Baishi
- Huang Yongyu
- Wang Xianzhi
- Xu Wei
- Guan Daosheng
- Li Yin

...

Step 2 Collect information

Search on the Internet and collect information. Consider the following questions in your search.

- When and where did the artist live?
- How did the artist choose their art form?
- What are the masterpieces of the artist?
- What is the unique style of the artist? And how does the style come into being?
- Are there any interesting stories about the artist, the masterpieces, or the style?
- Does the artist's influence go beyond the nation?

...

Step 3 Plan your presentation

Organize your presentation in a logical manner and make your story as interesting as possible. Your presentation may include:

- the background of the artist, e.g. what period they lived in, what kind of family they came from, etc.
- the story about why the artist chose the art form, by accident or by following a family member
- the masterpieces of the artist
- the special features about the artist's style
- the interesting stories about the artist, the masterpieces, or the style
- the artist's influence on Chinese culture

...

Step 4 Present the artist's story

Present the artist's story to the class. Have a class vote on the three most attractive stories. And present them at the festival.

Further listening



News report

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

herbal /'hɜ:bl/ a. 药草(制)的
clinic /'klɪnɪk/ n. 诊所

Listen to a news report and choose the best answer to each of the questions you hear.

- 1 A. TCM is welcomed by African countries.
B. Africa is becoming TCM's largest market.
C. The Chinese population in Africa has been increasing.
D. The global herbal medicine market has grown rapidly.
- 2 A. TCM is more expensive than local medicine in Africa.
B. The number of people practicing TCM in Africa is decreasing.
C. Clinics using TCM often fill holes in African healthcare systems.
D. Africans regard TCM as the best alternative to Western medicine.
- 3 A. About 20 percent of Africans.
B. Nearly 30 percent of Africans.
C. Around 60 percent of Africans.
D. More than 80 percent of Africans.

Conversation

Listen to a conversation and choose the best answer to each of the questions you hear.

- 1 A. Tang Barbie.
B. Buddhist monks.
C. Persian style clothes.
D. Trade on the Silk Road.
- 2 A. People traveled on the Silk Road for a variety of reasons.
B. The main reason for traveling on the Silk Road was trade.
C. The greatest part about the Silk Road is its cultural mixing.
D. Buddhist monks traveled on the Silk Road to study with learned teachers.
- 3 A. Buddhist monks teaching students.
B. Artists bringing their skills to new places.
C. Skilled workers studying with learned teachers.
D. People leaving their war-torn lands for safer places.

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

Persian /'pɜːʃn/ a. 波斯的
Buddhist /'bʊdɪst/ a. 佛教的
monk /mʌŋk/ n. 僧侣

PROPER NAMES

Silk Road 丝绸之路
Turpan /'tʊə'pɑːn/ 吐鲁番
(中国城市)
Barbie /'bɑːbi/ doll 芭比娃娃

Passage

Listen to a passage and choose the best answer to each of the questions you hear.

- 1 A. Three oldest art forms in the world.
B. Brief introduction to Chinese opera.
C. The training of Peking Opera actors.
D. Chinese folk songs, dances, and local music.
- 2 A. Chinese opera is the oldest opera in the world.
B. Peking Opera took shape in Beijing in the early Qing Dynasty.
C. Peking Opera took on the musical and performance styles of other operas.
D. Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera are the most famous ones of Chinese opera.
- 3 A. He needs to learn some martial arts and Chinese literature.
B. He needs to become a singer and dancer, and learn Chinese literature.
C. He needs to be an expert in sports, and be trained from an early age.
D. He needs to be trained from an early age, and spend years on practice.

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

dynasty /'daɪnəsti/ n. 朝; 代