

Chinese pictograms

Early Chinese writing was composed of different symbols that often resembled the objects they stood for. Sometimes two symbols were combined in some way to represent a whole new word or idea. Over time, these images - called **pictograms** - were simplified and adjusted as Chinese writing developed and expanded. Today, modern Chinese script contains tens of thousands of characters representing all kinds of words, letters, numbers and concepts. Despite this language 'modernisation', there are still a couple of hundred pictograms in use. Here are a few Chinese pictograms:

<p>1. Explain in what ways each pictogram on the left-hand side is similar to the actual object it represents.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>person</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>roof</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>tree</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>eye</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </div> </div>	<p>2. Explain how the combinations of symbols in these pictograms help create the word or idea they represent.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>forest</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>see</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>bed</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </div> </div>
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3. Imagine you were living in China 4,000 years ago and you wanted to write a pictogram for each of the English words above. What symbols would you have drawn? Make sure you retain the Chinese style in the pictograms you design.

person	roof	tree	eye	forest	see	bed
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4. Now design another 21 pictograms for common objects or ideas. Combine some of them to form new words or ideas.

me	you					
school	city					
friend	hungry					

5. Use your pictogram collection to write some simple sentences. You might like to swap letter codes with a partner and share secret pictogram messages!

References: SOSE Alive 1, p101 • Retroactive 1 2E, Chapter 5 • SOSE for Queensland 1, pp36-7, 58-9, 69
Jacaranda SOSE 1 2E, pp28-31 • Jacaranda SOSE: Ancient History, pp46, 70-73, 135, 147