

50 Most Confusing Chinese Characters

Free printable cheat sheet · HanziHero · updated 23 August 2026

How to use it: name one visible difference, read a real word, then open the linked interactive comparison at hanzihero.app/similar-characters when a pair still causes mistakes.

Characters	What to notice	Visible cue	Words
未 / 末	Compare horizontal length	■: longer upper line · ■: longer lower line	未来 / 周末
己 / 已 / 巳	Compare opening and final turn	■: lower opening · ■: higher turn · ■: closes lower	自己 / 已经 / 巳时
人 / 入 / 八	Compare how strokes meet	■: legs meet at top · ■: top leans inward · ■: open split	人们 / 进入 / 八点
土 / 士	Compare the longest horizontal	■: lower line longer · ■: upper line longer	土地 / 士兵
日 / 曰 / 目	Compare box proportions and inner lines	■ is flatter; ■ is taller with more inner detail	日子 / 子曰 / 目标
木 / 本 / 术	Look for the extra mark	■ adds a root line; ■ adds a dot	木头 / 本子 / 技术
天 / 夫	Check the vertical relation	■ has a top line above ■; ■ has a vertical through it	今天 / 夫妻
大 / 太 / 犬	Locate the dot	■: dot below · ■: dot at upper right	大家 / 太大 / 小犬
王 / 玉 / 主	Locate the dot	■: dot inside · ■: dot above	国王 / 玉石 / 主人
口 / 囗	Compare enclosure size	■ is the enclosing form; ■ is the smaller mouth	人口 / 围困
刀 / 力	Check hook versus slant	■ has a hooked inner stroke; ■ has a long slant	小刀 / 力气
鸟 / 乌	Find the eye dot	■ has the small eye dot; ■ does not	小鸟 / 乌云
问 / 间 / 闻 / 闷	Keep ■ fixed; read inside	■ ask · ■ between · ■ hear · ■ stuffy	问题 / 时间 / 新闻 / 闷热

Characters	What to notice	Visible cue	Words
候 / 侯	Find the extra vertical	■ has an extra vertical stroke in the middle	时候 / 王侯
买 / 卖	Check the top	■ adds ■ above ■	买东西 / 卖东西
喝 / 渴	Read the left semantic component	■ drink · ■ thirsty	喝水 / 口渴
在 / 再	Read the word, then form	■ is location; ■ is again	在家 / 再见
今 / 令	Check the lower component	■ adds a small lower stroke	今天 / 命令
免 / 兔	Find the dot	■ adds a dot	免费 / 兔子
失 / 矢	Compare the top	■ has the arrowhead form	失去 / 矢量
洒 / 酒	Find the water radical and inner mark	■ has ■ with its inner detail	洒水 / 喝酒
谈 / 淡	Read the left semantic component	■ speech · ■ water/light	谈话 / 淡水
具 / 真	Check the top	■ adds ■ above the box	工具 / 真的
状 / 壮	Check the left component	■ uses ■; ■ uses ■	状态 / 强壮
晴 / 睛 / 清 / 情 / 请	Read the left side	■ sunny · ■ eye · ■ clear · ■ feeling · ■ request	晴天 / 眼睛 / 清楚 / 心情 / 请问

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