

## **Mandarin**

普通話 [普通话]

國語 [国语]

華語 [华语]

**Spoken in:** China, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Chinese communities around the world

**Region:** Most of northern and south western China; widely understood in the rest of China

**Total speakers:** 867.2 million

**Genetic Classification:** Sino-Tibetan Chinese Mandarin

**Official language of:** People's Republic of China, Republic of China, and Singapore

The present main divisions of the Chinese language developed out of Archaic Chinese and Middle Chinese.

Most Chinese living from the north-east (Manchuria) to the south-west (Yunnan), use various Mandarin dialects as their home language. The prevalence of linguistic homogeneity (i.e. Mandarin) throughout northern China is largely the result of geography, namely the plains of north China. By contrast, the mountains and rivers of southern China have promoted linguistic diversity. The presence of Mandarin in southwest China is largely due to a plague in the 12th century in Sichuan. This plague, which may have been related to the Black Death, depopulated the area, leading to later settlement from north China.

Mandarin Chinese is a category of Chinese dialects spoken across most of northern and southwestern China. The term "Mandarin" can also refer to Standard Mandarin, which is based on the Mandarin dialect spoken in Beijing.

When taken as an independent language, as is often done in academic literature, Mandarin has more speakers than any other language, it is the native language of two-thirds of the world population.

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 5.5 FTE Mandarin interpreters and 18 sessional interpreters.