

# Culture Cards Presents:

## Language and Translation

How we write differs around the globe, along with the words and phrases that we use.

Words and phrases have different personal meanings for all of us and may take on other forms in other languages.

For example, in the English language, we use the term children to refer to younger people.

We also use the terms kids, pre-teens, and probably other nicknames that we use informally.

Let's look at how children are referred to in Cantonese, which is a Chinese dialect. In Cantonese, 小朋友 - siu2 pang4 jau5 - directly translates to "small friends" and is used by adults to refer to children.

小朋友 specifically is an informal or casual term that can be used by adults that may be related to the children or not.

The Chinese language uses a logographic writing system, which uses symbols to represent words.

For those that read and write in a Germanic language, such as English, we can find the romanization of these characters. For Cantonese this is called jyutping.

The numbers refer to the tone that is placed on the syllable. In this example, we would pronounce "siu" with a high rising tone, "pang" with a falling tone, and "jau" with a mid rising tone.

Now imagine a bunch of equally sized squares on a piece of paper. A single chinese character is drawn in exactly one square.

The strokes of a character are also drawn in a specific order. This is how you would write siu pang jau. In a top to bottom and left to right fashion.

So, that's a look at a commonly used Cantonese phrase, and how one would write it.

What other languages and translations can we learn from?