Simplified Chinese Characters (**simplified Chinese**: 简化字; [traditional Chinese](#): 簡化字; [pinyin](#): Jiǎnhuàzì *or* **simplified Chinese**: 简体字; [traditional Chinese](#): 簡體字; [pinyin](#): Jiǎntǐzì) are one of two standard sets of [Chinese characters](#) of the contemporary [Chinese written language](#). They are based mostly on popular cursive ([caoshu](#)) forms embodying graphic or phonetic simplifications of the "traditional" forms that were used in printed text for over a thousand years. The government of the [People's Republic of China](#) has promoted them for use in printing in an attempt to increase literacy. They are officially used in the [People's Republic of China](#) or [Mainland China](#), [Singapore](#), [Malaysia](#) and the [United Nations](#).

[Traditional Chinese](#) is currently used in the [Republic of China](#) or [Taiwan](#), [Hong Kong](#) and [Macau](#). [Overseas Chinese](#) communities generally use traditional characters, but simplified characters are used among mainland Chinese immigrants. At the same time, the prestige of traditional characters is increasing in the [People's Republic of China](#)[*citation needed*]. However, a majority of the Chinese-speaking world does use Simplified Characters.

The **debate on [traditional Chinese characters](#) and [simplified Chinese characters](#)** (繁簡之爭, more recently: 正簡之爭;[1] a.k.a. 漢字簡化爭論) is an ongoing debate concerning Chinese orthography among users of Chinese characters. It has stirred up heated responses from supporters of both sides in [mainland China](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Taiwan](#), and among [overseas Chinese](#) communities with its implications of political ideology and cultural identity.[2] Simplified characters here exclusively refer to those characters simplified by the [People's Republic of China](#), instead of the concept of character simplification as a whole. The effect of simplified characters on the language remains controversial decades after their introduction.