

*Michel Thomas*<sup>®</sup> method

# Mandarin Chinese

## Introductory Course

Harold Goodman

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Typeset by Transet Limited, Coventry, England.

Printed in Great Britain for Hodder Arnold, a division of Hodder Headline, an Hachette Livre company, 338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH.

Impression 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Year 2011 2010 2009 2008 2007

ISBN 978 0340 95722 6

# ***Introduction***

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## **What is the Michel Thomas Method?**

The Michel Thomas Method\* all-audio courses, published by Hodder Arnold, provide an accelerated method for language learning that is truly revolutionary. And they promise a remarkable educational experience that will make your learning both exciting and pleasurable.

## **How does the Method work?**

The Method works by breaking a language down into its component parts, enabling learners to reconstruct the language themselves – to form their own sentences, to say what they want, when they want. Because you learn the language in small steps, you can build it up yourself to produce ever more complicated sentences.

**No books  
No writing  
Just confidence – in hours**

The Michel Thomas Method is 'in tune' with the way your brain works, so you assimilate the language easily and don't forget it! The Method teaches you through your own language, so there's no stress, and no anxiety. The teacher builds up the new language, step by step, and you don't move on till you've absorbed and understood the previous point. As Michel Thomas said, *'What you understand, you know, and what you know, you don't forget.'*

With parallels to the way you learnt your own language, each language is learnt in 'real-time' conditions. There is no need to stop for homework, additional exercises or vocabulary memorization.

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\*US patent 6,565,358

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*'Learning Spanish with Michel was the most extraordinary learning experience of my life – it was unforgettable.'*

**Emma Thompson**

*'Michel Thomas is a precious find indeed.'*

**The Guardian**

The classroom situation on the recording lets you learn with others. You enjoy their success, and you learn from their mistakes. The students on the recordings are not reading from scripts and they have received no additional instruction or preparation – just the guidance you hear on the recording. You, as the learner, become the third student and participate actively in the class.

A very important part of the Michel Thomas Method is that full responsibility for your learning lies with the teacher, not with you, the pupil. This helps to ensure that you can relax, and feel confident, so allowing you to learn effectively.

You will enjoy the Method as it creates real excitement – you can't wait to use the language.

*'There's no such thing as a poor student, only a poor teacher.'*

**Michel Thomas**

### **What level of language will I achieve?**

The Introductory and Foundation courses are designed for complete beginners. They make no assumption of a knowledge of any language other than English. They will give the beginner a practical and functional use of the

### HOW ARE THE RECORDINGS BEST USED?

- **Relax!** Make yourself comfortable before playing the recording and try to let go of the tensions and anxieties traditionally associated with learning.
- **Do not write or take any notes.** Remove notebooks, pens, dictionaries and anything else associated with learning at school.
- **Do not try to remember.** While participating in the recording and afterwards, it is important that you do not try to memorize specific words or expressions. It is a basic principle of the Michel Thomas Method that the responsibility for the student's learning lies with the teacher. With the Michel Thomas Method as your teacher, your learning will be based on understanding, and what you understand you don't forget.
- **Interact fully with the recordings.** Use the pause button and respond out loud (or in a whisper, or in your head, if you are in a public place) before the students' responses. *This is essential.* You do not learn by repetition but by thinking out the answers to each question; it is by your own thought process that you truly learn.
- **Give yourself time to think.** The students on the recordings had all the time they needed to think out their responses. On the recordings their 'thinking time' has been cut in order to make full use of the recording time. You can take all the time you need (by using your pause button). The pause button is the key to *your* learning! To get you used to pausing the recording before the students' responses, bleeps have been added to the first few tracks. When you hear the bleep, pause the recording, think out and say your response, then release the pause button to hear the student's, then the teacher's, response.
- **Start at the beginning of the course.** Whatever your existing knowledge of the language you are learning, it is important that you follow the way that the teacher builds up your knowledge of the language.
- **Do not get annoyed with yourself if you make a mistake.** Mistakes are part of the learning process; as long as you understand why you made the mistake and you have the 'ahaa' reaction – 'yes, of course, I understand now' – you are doing fine. If you made a mistake and you do not understand why, you may have been daydreaming for a few seconds. The course is structured so that you cannot go on unless you fully understand everything, so just go back a little and you will pick up where you left off.
- **Stop the recording whenever it suits you.** You will notice that this course is not divided into lessons; you will always be able to pick up from where you left off, without the need to review.

6 spoken language. They are also appropriate for anyone who has studied a language before, but has forgotten much of it or does not have confidence in speaking.

The Introductory course comprises the first two hours of the Foundation Course. The Advanced course follows on from the Foundation course and expands on structures touched on in the earlier course to improve your understanding and mastery of complex language.

The Michel Thomas Method teaches the everyday conversational language that will allow you to communicate in a wide variety of situations, empowered by the ability to create your own sentences and use the language naturally, having absorbed the vocabulary and grammatical structures.

### **How quickly can I learn with the Michel Thomas Method?**

One of the most remarkable features of the Michel Thomas Method is the speed with which results are achieved. A knowledge of the language that will take months of conventional study can be achieved in a matter of hours with the Michel Thomas Method. The teacher masterfully guides the student through an instructional process at a very rapid rate – yet the process will appear informal, relaxed and unhurried. The teacher moves quickly between numerous practice sessions, which all build the learners' confidence in their ability to communicate in complex ways.

Because the Michel Thomas Method is based on understanding, not memorization, there is no set limit to the length of time that you should study the course. It offers immersion without strain or stress, and you will find the recordings are not divided into lessons, though the material has been indexed for your convenience (pages 11–13). This means that you can stop and start as you please.

The excitement of learning will motivate you to continue listening and learning for as long a time as is practical for you. This will enable you to make progress faster than you ever imagined possible.

## Who is the Michel Thomas Method for?

Anyone can learn a language with the Michel Thomas Method – and the wide diversity of Michel Thomas’s own students proves this. Not only did Michel instruct the rich and famous, but he also taught many so-called ‘hopeless cases’. For example, in 1997, Michel taught French to a group of sixteen-year-olds in north London who had been told they could never learn a language, and gave them the ability to use the new language far beyond their expectations – in just a week. Perhaps more importantly, he gave them the confidence to speak and a belief in, and the experience of, their own ability to learn.

Whatever your motivation for learning a language, the Michel Thomas Method quite simply offers the most effective method that is available.

## What can I do next?

Try to speak with native speakers whenever possible, as this is invaluable for improving your fluency. Television broadcasts via satellite and podcasts (especially those which feature interviews) will give you practice in the most current and idiomatic language. Expose yourself to the language whenever you can – you will have firm foundations on which to build.

Continue your study with the Foundation and Advanced courses. Then build your vocabulary with the existing and planned Vocabulary courses, which carry forward the Michel Thomas Method teaching tradition and faithfully follow Michel Thomas’s unique approach to foreign language learning. The series editor is Dr Rose Lee Hayden, Michel’s most experienced and trusted teacher. The courses remain faithful to the method Michel Thomas used in his earlier courses, with the all-audio and ‘building-block’ approach. The presenter builds on Michel’s foundations to encourage the student at home to build up their vocabulary in the foreign language, using relationships with English, where appropriate, or connections within the foreign language itself. The student takes part in the audio, following prompts by the presenter, as in Michel Thomas’ original Foundation and Advanced courses. The teaching is all in English, while native speakers give models for perfect pronunciation and increase the opportunity for practice.

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## Who was Michel Thomas?



*Michel with Grace Kelly*

Michel Thomas (1914–2005) spent most of his childhood in Germany and France. He studied psychology at the Sorbonne (Paris) and at the University of Vienna. During the Second World War he fought for the French Resistance; after the war he worked for the U.S. army. His war-time experiences, including two years in concentration and labour camps and torture at the hands of the Gestapo, fuelled his passion for teaching languages, as a result of which he developed a uniquely effective language-

teaching method that brought to his door celebrities (including Barbra Streisand and Emma Thompson), diplomats, academics and business executives from around the world. He established the first Michel Thomas Language Center in Beverly Hills in 1947, and continued to travel the world teaching languages for the rest of his life.

## Whom did Michel Thomas teach?

People came from all over the world to learn a foreign language with Michel Thomas – because his method works. His students, numbering in the thousands, included well-known people from the arts and from the corporate, political and academic worlds. For example, he taught French to filmstar Grace Kelly prior to her marriage to Prince Rainier of Monaco.

Michel's list of clients included:

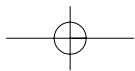
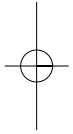
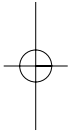
- *Celebrities:* Emma Thompson, Woody Allen, Barbra Streisand, Warren Beatty, Melanie Griffith, Eddie Izzard, Bob Dylan, Jean Marsh, Donald Sutherland, Mrs George Harrison, Anne Bancroft, Mel Brooks, Nastassja Kinski, Carl Reiner, Raquel Welch, Johnny Carson, Julie Andrews, Isabelle Adjani, Candice Bergen, Barbara Hershey, Priscilla Presley, Loretta Swit, Tony Curtis, Diana Ross, Herb Alpert, Angie Dickinson, Lucille Ball, Doris Day, Janet Leigh, Natalie Wood, Jayne Mansfield, Ann-Margaret, Yves Montand,

Kim Novak, Otto Preminger, Max von Sydow, Peter Sellers, François Truffaut, Sophia Coppola.

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- *Diplomats, dignitaries and academics:* Former U.S. Ambassador to France, Walter Curley; U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Joseph V. Reed; Cardinal John O'Connor, Archbishop of New York; Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua, Archbishop of Philadelphia; Armand Hammer; Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York; Professor Herbert Morris, Dean of Humanities at UCLA; Warren Keegan, Professor of Business at Pace University in New York; Professor Wesley Posvar, former President of the University of Pittsburgh.

- *Executives from the following corporations:* AT&T International, Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, Chase Manhattan Bank, American Express, Merrill Lynch, New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Boeing Aircraft, General Electric, Westinghouse Electric, Bank of America, Max Factor, Rand Corporation, Bertelsmann Music Group-RCA, Veuve Clicquot Inc., McDonald's Corporation, Rover, British Aerospace.



## Track listing

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### Note about transliteration

The Mandarin words are transliterated in this track listing using the *pin-yin* method of romanization. In this method the tones are represented by marks on the vowels that look like the hand movements that we're using (see pages 15–16):

- flat tone (green thumb out)
- ' rising tone (blue finger up)
- ˋ falling and rising tone (red 'V' for victory)
- ` falling tone (black finger down)

### CD1 Track 1

Introduction. How to use this course. Background to Chinese

### CD1 Track 2

Tones in Chinese languages

### CD1 Track 3

Flat tone (green thumb out); *zhōng* 'middle'

### CD1 Track 4

Rising tone (blue finger up); *rén* 'person'

### CD1 Track 5

Falling and rising tone (red 'V' for victory); *wǒ* 'I, me'

### CD1 Track 6

Falling tone (black finger down); *shì* 'to be'

### CD1 Track 7

The form of the verb 'to be' in Chinese doesn't change: *shì* ('to be') also means 'am, are, is'; *wǒ shì* 'I am'

### CD1 Track 8

*nǐ* 'you'; *nǐ shì* 'you are'; the forms of Chinese verbs never change. No word for 'a' or 'an': *wǒ shì rén* 'I am a person'.

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**CD1 Track 9**

*guó* 'kingdom, nation'; *zhōng guó* 'middle kingdom' = China; *zhōng guó rén* 'middle kingdom person' = Chinese (person)

**CD1 Track 10**

*tā* 'he, him, she, her, it'; *dōu* 'both, all'; *hé* 'and'; position of *dōu* 'both, all' in Mandarin sentences: 'You and he **both** are Chinese', not 'are both', as in English.

**CD1 Track 11**

*měi* 'beautiful'; *měi guó* 'America'; *měi guó rén* 'American'; *yīng* 'brave'; *yīng guó* 'England, Britain'; *yīng guó rén* 'English'

**CD1 Track 12**

*mén* = plural form of individual, single form; *wǒmen* 'we, us'; *nǐmen* 'you'; *tāmen* 'they, them'; *kěshì* 'but'

**CD1 Track 13**

*ma* = question marker, to change a statement into a question; *shì* 'is' can be used to mean 'yes'

**CD1 Track 14**

*nǐne* 'how about you?'; *tāmenne* 'how about them?'

**CD1 Track 15**

*máng* 'busy'; also means 'to be busy'

**CD1 Track 16**

*bù* 'no, not'

**CD2 Tracks 1 and 2**

*hěn* 'very', also fulfils the two-syllable meter rule: a dummy word to go with an adjective; *bù máng* 'not busy'

**CD2 Tracks 3 and 4**

*nǐ hǎo* 'hello'; *hǎo* 'good, to be good, do well'; *nǐ hǎo ma* 'you good? you doing well?' = 'how are you?'

**CD2 Track 5**

In Chinese the character/word has the same form for both individual and plural form; word order determines meaning

**CD2 Track 6**

*yě* 'also, too'; *bù hěn hǎo* 'not very good, well'

**CD2 Track 7**

*bú shì* 'not is' ('trampoline' rule)

**CD2 Track 8**

A question with a question word, such as *wèi shénme* 'why'. All Chinese languages use the same characters to mean the same thing, but their pronunciation differs.

**CD2 Track 9**

*kàn* 'look, see'; *shū* 'book'; *kàn shū* 'to read book'; saying 'yes' by repeating verb

**CD2 Track 10**

*xiàn zài* 'now'; *zài* 'at' emphasizes 'at this very moment'

**CD2 Track 11**

Word order in Chinese: who–when–what is happening

**CD2 Track 12**

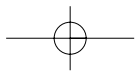
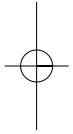
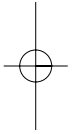
*xiǎng* 'would like to'

**CD2 Track 13**

*jiàn* 'to get together, see somebody, meet'; *bù xiǎng* 'would not like to'

**CD2 Track 14**

*tài* 'too'; *néng* 'can'; *bù néng* 'cannot'; *tài ... bù néng* 'too ... no can' = 'too ... to'



## ***Learning the tones using hand movements***

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Mandarin has four tones, plus a neutral non-tone, which are critical for communication. While there is considerable leeway for differences in pronunciation (many Chinese learn Mandarin as a second language) there is very little for tones. If your tone is off you won't be understood. Tones, when made user-friendly, are actually quite simple to grasp and integrate into your learning.

The method for learning the tones\* which you will experience in this course is specifically designed to address all styles of language learning. It will permit your central nervous system to permanently create pathways that reflect your personal learning style (visual, kinaesthetic, auditory, etc.) and support you in effortless recall and usage of the correct tone at the proper moment in your communication. It works on a subconscious level. You will very quickly find that you are using the movements as a natural part of your learning. These movements work. They have been tested and refined on students without any previous knowledge of Mandarin from many different backgrounds and age levels (teens to the elderly). I encourage you to allow your hands to move with the movements. For some of you that will be essential. For others, this will be less essential. Trust whatever helps you. It will work for you as you permit it to do so.

In this method of teaching tones, each movement is linked to a tone and colour. Romanized Mandarin (*pin-yin*) is written with four distinct tones, which are shown with marks over the affected vowel. These marks are shown in brackets below. The tones are generally listed in the following order when taught and when words are listed in a dictionary.

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\*patent pending

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**First tone:** (ˉ) long, steady tone. **Colour:** Green.  
**Movement:** Thumb out to side with closed fist.  
**Example:** *zhōng* ('middle').



**Second tone:** (ˊ) rising tone. **Colour:** Blue.  
**Movement:** Index finger pointing up.  
**Example:** *rén* ('person').



**Third tone:** (ˇ) falling–rising tone. This tone actually resembles a tick mark (UK) or check mark (US) (✓). It starts rather low, goes down a bit and then rises up to the level of the green tone. Please pay close attention to the Chinese native speaker's illustration of this tone. **Colour:** Red.  
**Movement:** Closed fist with index and middle fingers forming a V and pointing up.  
**Example:** *wǒ* ('I, me').



**Fourth tone:** (ˋ) falling tone. **Colour:** Black.  
**Movement:** Index finger pointing down.  
**Example:** *shì* ('to be, am, is, are').



**Neutral non-tone:** toneless. **Colour:** None.  
**Movement:** Closed fist.  
**Example:** *ma* (question marker).



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- No books
- No writing
- Just confidence

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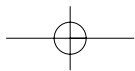
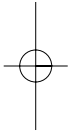
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## Have your say! Listener response form

1. What is your name?
2. Are you  male or  female?
3. What is your age?
4. What is your occupation?
5. What is your address (email and/or postal)?
6. How did you hear about the Michel Thomas Method?
7. Why are you learning a language?
8. Which language are you studying?
9. Which of the Michel Thomas Method courses have you done?
10. Where did you buy/borrow them from?
11. Have you tried another method before? If so, which product?
12. What's the best thing about learning with the Michel Thomas Method?

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'a great way to learn; it's fast and it lasts'

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