

Name _____ **Vocabulary**

The Chinese Alphabet

DIRECTIONS: Read the paragraph. Answer the questions.

An alphabet is a set of letters or symbols in a fixed order where each letter or sound stands for a basic sounds in a language. Fixed order means that the order of the letters is always the same. Before alphabets, written language was made up of pictures that represented, or stood for, ideas or objects. In ancient China, these pictures were called “pictograms”, and each pictogram represented a whole word, for example, “water” or “city”. There are different kinds of alphabets. Today, written language in China is somewhere between what we think of as an “alphabet” and those ancient “pictograms”, with each character representing an idea instead of a sound. Look at the examples for “family”, “life” and “peace”.



1. What is an “alphabet”? _____

2. What does “fixed” mean? _____

3. What is a “pictogram”? _____

