

Chinese Calligraphy Script Styles



Regular/Standard script (*Kaishu*) 楷書

Regular script is a slowly and carefully executed script that has distinct strokes. It is the most widely recognized and easily legible style.



Seal script/small seal (*Zhuanshu*) 篆書

Seal script evolved during the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770—251 B.C) and is the oldest style that continues to be widely used. Most people cannot read the script, but it is used in seals that are customary for legal signatures and in the presentation of art works.



Clerical/Official script (*Lishu*) 隸書

Clerical script developed in the early Western Han dynasty (202 B.C.—9 A.D.). Compared to the preceding seal script, it is typically wider and more rectilinear.



Semi-cursive/Running script (*Xingshu*)

行書

Semi-cursive script resembles handwriting in that it allows strokes to flow into one another. Characters are less rigid and can be challenging to read.



Cursive/Grass script (*Caoshu*) 草書

Cursive script is a dramatically expressive style of writing that sometimes eliminates or modifies strokes in order to enhance aesthetic appeal. It is primarily used by literati calligraphers, and is not easily legible to the average person.