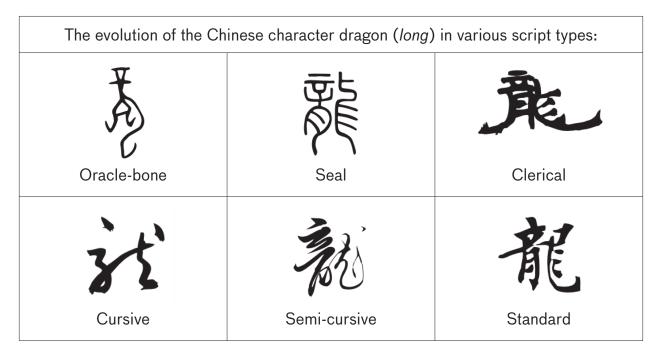
Scripts

Five basic scripts have emerged over 2000 years: Calligraphers design each character to fit into an imaginary square-whether it is composed of one or sixty-four strokes. Writers must create each stroke of a character in a particular order, essentially from left to right and from top to bottom.



There are five basic scripts regularly used in Chinese calligraphy:

Seal script (Chinese: *zhuanshu*)

These careful, straight lines are related to the earliest forms of Chinese writing.

Clerical script (lishu)

More angled strokes allowed clerks to write official documents more easily and quickly.

Standard or regular script (kaishu)

This clear and easy to read script is commonly used in printed books and signs today.

Semi-cursive script (xingshu; "running script")

Strokes tend to run together within each character, but the artist usually lifts the brush between each character.

Cursive script (caoshu; "grass script")

In this free and spontaneous script, artists may get away with abbreviating and abstracting the characters. Characters may run together.