

BÓYÌ 博 弈 · WEEK 7

wú zhōng shēng yǒu

无 中 生 有

Make something out of nothing.

More than 1,200 years ago, a city was under siege and had almost no arrows. At night, the men on the wall lowered straw figures in black clothes. The camp shot at them all night. Later they lowered the ropes again, and the camp only laughed — so what came down that time were real soldiers. This week you'll learn to write four characters: 无, 中, 生, 有.

Stratagem No. 7 of 36 · one story, one lesson, four characters.

本周学：无中生有 · 练字：无、中、生、有

STRAW MEN ON THE WALL



Straw, black cloth, rope — the bundle takes the shape of a man.

According to the old book New Book of Tang, this happened more than 1,200 years ago. A city was under siege. Inside, one problem: no arrows left.

Outside, a camp much bigger than the city. At night, they carried bundles of straw up the wall.

They dressed the straw in black clothes, and tied ropes on it. Then they lowered them over the wall, one by one.

From below, a man in black on a rope looks like a man. The camp saw them. Bows came up.

For a long time, nobody down there noticed. What they had been shooting was straw.

《新唐书·张巡传》

THE SECOND TIME WAS REAL



The second time, what comes down the ropes is not straw.

Up on the wall, they pulled the bundles back over the edge. Every bundle was stuck full of arrows.

The soldiers stood around them and pulled the arrows out. That night, the city had arrows again.

Later, they lowered ropes again. The camp looked, and laughed. Nobody picked up a bow.

This time, what came down the ropes was not straw. They hit the ground running, straight into the camp.

The camp burned. The city that had no arrows was still standing.

《新唐书·张巡传》

WHY IT WORKED

Step	Who vs who	中文 · pinyin	Result
Look there	Straw men on ropes, black clothes	无 wú	No arrows left
Shoot it	Arrows all night, into straw	生 shēng	The city has arrows again
Go again	Nobody picks up a bow	有 yǒu	Real soldiers, real fire

假只买时间，真的从里面长出来。无中生有 wú zhōng shēng yǒu

THE ORIGINAL LINES

《三十六计·第七计 无中生有》

The Thirty-Six Stratagems, No. 7 — "Make something out of nothing"

1 kuáng yě fēi kuáng yě
誑也，非誑也，
Deceive — but then make the deception true.

2 shí qí suǒ kuáng yě.
實其所誑也。

3 shào yīn tài yīn tài yáng
少陰、太陰、太陽。
Dark below, bright above.

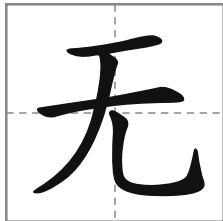
Three lines, nothing more. The last line is read from yin and yang in the I Ching; this stratagem does not name a hexagram, so we don't either. The long commentary that follows in old editions is not part of this text.

原文只有这三句。「少阴、太阴、太阳」出自《易经》；旧版本没注是哪一卦，这里也不点。后面那段按语是老版本的注释，不进原文框。

PRACTICE · 无 WÚ · 中 ZHONG

Follow the numbers. Write each stroke in order.

先描一遍分解格，再在田字格里写 5 遍。

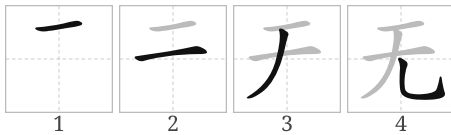


wú

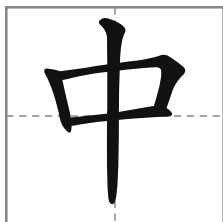
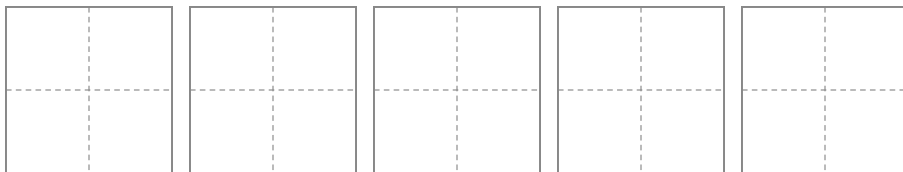
nothing; without

4 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

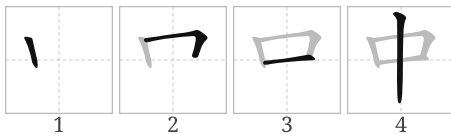


zhōng

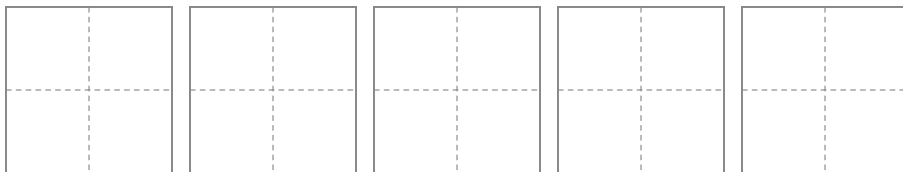
inside; middle

4 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



PRACTICE · 生 SHĒNG · 有 Yǒu

Same order again. Write slowly, and say the sound out loud.

写完 4 个字，再回到第 7 页连写整句。

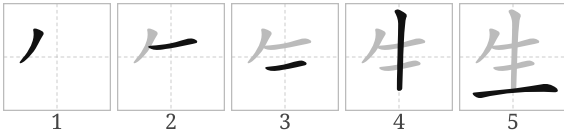


shēng

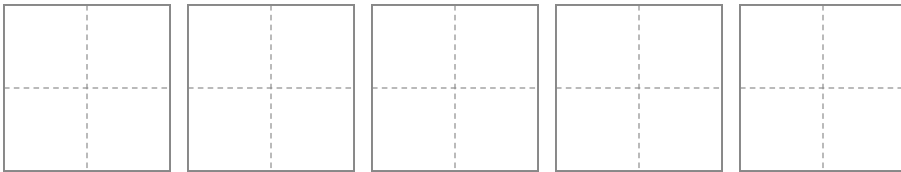
to give birth; to grow

5 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

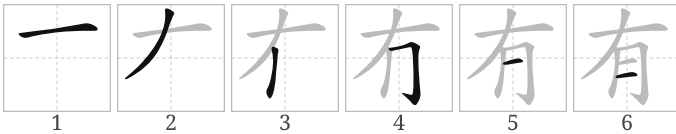


yǒu

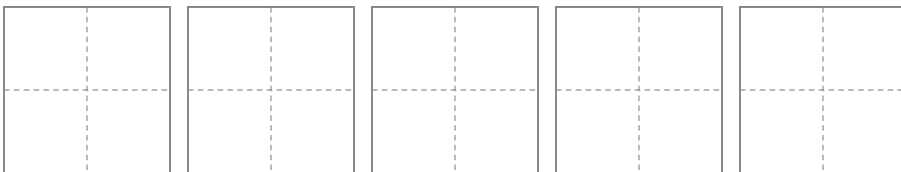
to have

6 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



PRACTICE · 无中生有 WÚ ZHONG SHENG YOU

Trace the first row, then write the whole phrase four times. Say it out loud each time.

wú	zhōng	shēng	yǒu
无	中	生	有

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无中生有 · Make something out of nothing.

THREE MORE WORDS

cǎo rén

1 草人

a figure made of straw.

tā men shè le bàn tiān de shì cǎo

他们射了半天的，是草。

What they had been shooting was straw.

The straw was not the trick. It was only the first half.

jiàn

2 箭

arrow.

chéng lǐ zhǐ yǒu yí gè wèn tí: jiàn shè guāng le

城里只有一个问题：箭射光了。

Inside, one problem: no arrows left.

Every bundle was stuck full of arrows.

zhēn de

3 真的

real.

dì èr cì kě néng shì zhēn de

第二次，可能是真的。

The second one might be real.

So the fake cannot stay fake. Something real has to come out of it.

SPOT IT · STOP IT 识破 · 防住

The alarm has gone off twice this month. Both times, nothing. So the third time, nobody stands up. Someone says: it is the kettle again. Then the smell comes under the door.

当桥 <i>A bridge: the fake buys time</i> cǎo rén huàn jiàn 草 人 换 箭 <i>Straw bought the arrows</i> yǎn xí huàn tuǐ 演 习 换 腿 <i>A drill buys the legs</i> cǎi pái huàn yǎn chū 彩 排 换 演 出 <i>A rehearsal buys the show</i>	当坑 <i>A trap: nothing behind it</i> zhǐ fā tōng gǎo 只 发 通 稿 <i>Only the press release</i> zhǐ yǒu yàng zhāng 只 有 样 张 <i>Only the sample</i> yǒng yuǎn zài xià zhōu 永 远 在 下 周 <i>Always next week</i>
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Two ways to use a fake. One is a bridge, one is a trap. Sooner or later, someone walks around the back and looks. So, one line: the second one might be real.

用「假」有两种：一种当桥，一种当坑。迟早有人绕到后面看一眼。一句话：第二次，可能是真的。

SEVEN DAYS, SEVEN QUESTIONS

Day 1 Which alarm did you stop believing this week?

火警 huǒ jǐng

Day 2 What was the first time a warning was wrong — and what did you stop checking after it?

警告 jǐng gào

Day 3 Where are you shooting arrows at something that is only straw?

草人 cǎo rén

Day 4 What is your fake buying time for — and is the real thing being built yet?

时间 shí jiān

Day 5 If someone hands you the same show twice, when do you pick up the bow again?

怀疑 huái yí

Day 6 Which of your own warnings has become background noise?

习惯 xí guàn

Day 7 What would you have to make real, before it stops being a lie?

真的 zhēn de

WEEK 7 REVIEW



Yoko
Read the 36 Stratagems with Yoko

第 7 计 / 36

无中生有
wú zhōngshēng yǒu

誑也，非誑也，實其所誑也。少陰、太陰、太陽。
《三十六计·无中生有》

古 THEN	空箭囊·城里没箭 NOTHING LEFT	→	草人中箭·箭是真的 THE FAKE PAID FOR THE REAL	→	同一个动作·又是黑影 "AGAIN?" — AND THEY STOPPED LOOKING
理 THE LOGIC	草人 vs 真兵 A HABIT, A DEFENCE	→	天平·假 vs 真 MAKE THE FAKE REAL		
今 TODAY	今天·同一个警铃 TODAY	→	一屋子低着的头 SAME LESSON, BOTH SIDES	→	门缝下的烟 WHICH ONE IS REAL?
正用 DO IT CLEAN	演习·有人举牌 A DRILL	→	排队下楼梯 THE STAIRS, LEARNED	→	同一段楼梯·身后有烟 THE DRILL IS THE REAL ONE

同一个警铃，早走一步，就不是骗了· A FIRST TIME, PRACTISED

The one-page summary of this week. 本周一图总结。

1. In one sentence: what did the camp shoot at all night?

2. What does 无中生有 mean, in your own words?

3. Which of this week's four characters can you write now without looking: 无, 中, 生, or 有?

4. Think of a time a warning was wrong twice. What did you stop doing after that?

Which second time this week might be real — and what did you stop checking?

这周哪一次「第二次」，可能是真的？你不再查的是什么？

Zhè zhōu nǎ yí cì dì èr cì, kě néng shì zhēn de? Nǐ bú zài chá de shì shén me?