

BÓYÌ 博弈 · WEEK 9

gé àn guān huǒ

隔岸观火

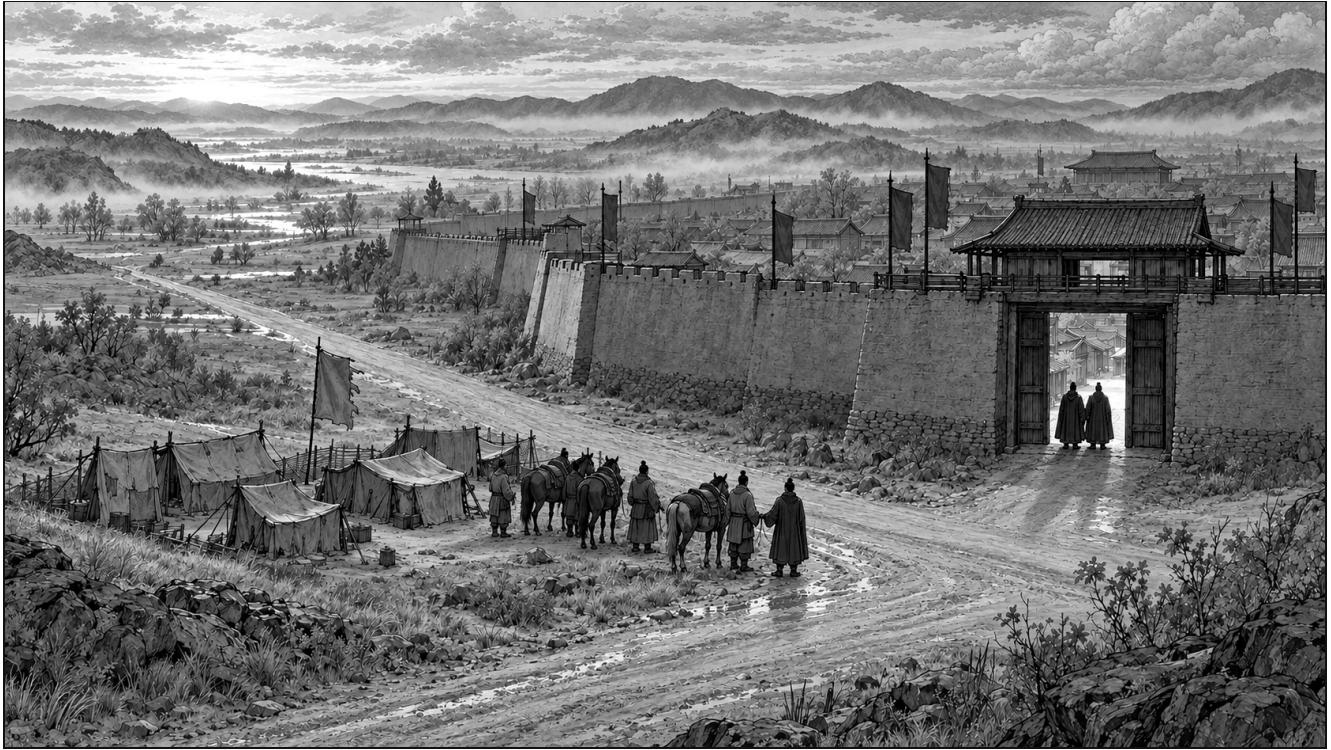
Watch the fire from the other bank.

More than 1,800 years ago, two brothers lost a war and a kingdom. They ran east with a few thousand riders, into a province run by a man who had never really obeyed the capital. The general who beat them turned his army around and went home. When his officers asked why, he gave them two lines. This week you'll learn to write four characters: 隔, 岸, 观, 火.

Stratagem No. 9 of 36 · one story, one lesson, four characters.

本周学：隔岸观火 · 练字：隔、岸、观、火

TWO BROTHERS, ONE PROVINCE



Outside the pass gate, a small party waits to ask for shelter.

According to the old book Records of the Three Kingdoms, this happened more than 1,800 years ago. Two brothers had just lost a war, and a kingdom.

They ran east, with a few thousand riders left. The man who beat them did not chase them to the end.

His officers wanted one more campaign, to finish it. So he said: no army.

"He will send them to me himself." In the ninth month, the army turned around and went home.

The two brothers reached the far province, and asked to stay. They still had soldiers, and they still had a name.

《三国志》

NOBODY FOUGHT FOR THEM



The tent flap opens, light comes in, and every officer turns.

So he solved it before the capital arrived. Nobody fought for them.

Then a messenger rode west. He walked into the tent, said one sentence, and every officer turned around.

Then his officers asked him why. He gave them two lines. First: that man had always been afraid of these two brothers.

Push him, and he has to stand with them. Leave him alone, and he does it himself.

He was right. The armies were still on the road home.

《三国志》

WHY IT WORKED

Step	Who vs who	中文 · pinyin	Result
Step back	The outsider leaves the room	隔 gé	Distance is the tool
Wait	They stop holding one story	岸 àn	Watch from the bank
They turn	The work does itself	观火 guān huǒ	Nobody fights for them

逼紧则合，退开则斗。隔岸观火 gé àn guān huǒ

THE ORIGINAL LINES

《三十六计·第九计 隔岸观火》

The Thirty-Six Stratagems, No. 9 — "Watch the fire from the other bank"

1

yáng guāi xù luàn yīn yǐ dài nì

陽乖序亂，陰以待逆。

When things inside are already broken, wait.

2

bào lì zì suī qí shì zì bì

暴戾恣睢，其勢自斃。

Their own violence destroys them.

3

shùn yǐ dòng yù yù shùn yǐ dòng

順以動豫，豫順以動。

Three lines, nothing more. The last two lines come from the I Ching. The long commentary that follows in old editions is not part of this text.

原文只有这三句。后两句出自《易经》：动要顺着时机，时机顺了才动。后面那段按语是老版本的注释，不进原文框。

PRACTICE · 隔 GÉ · 岸 ÀN

Follow the numbers. Write each stroke in order.

先描一遍分解格，再在田字格里写 5 遍。

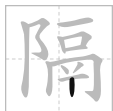
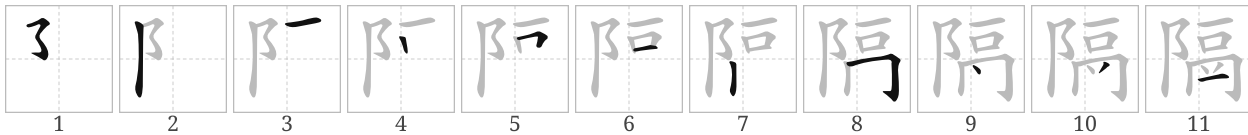


gé

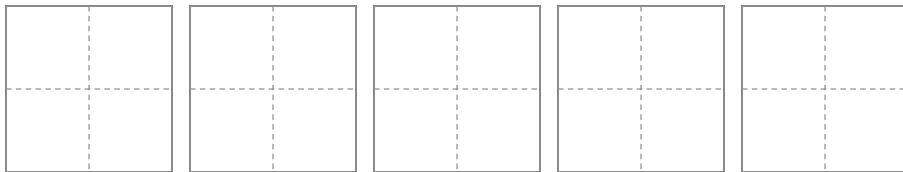
to separate; to be apart

12 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

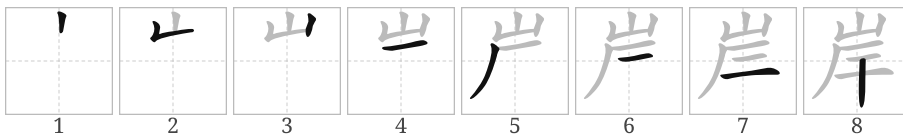


àn

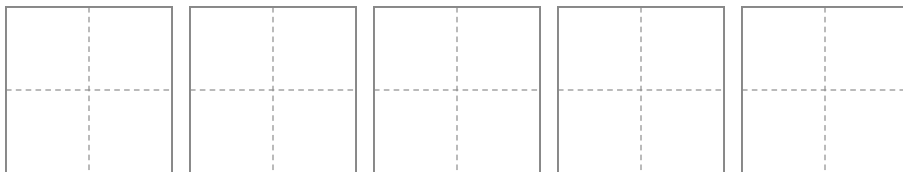
bank; shore

8 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



PRACTICE · 观 GUĀN · 火 HUǒ

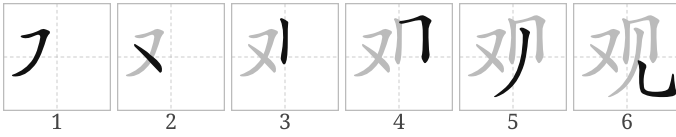
Same order again. Write slowly, and say the sound out loud.

写完 4 个字，再回到第 7 页连写整句。

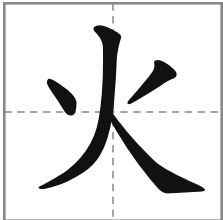
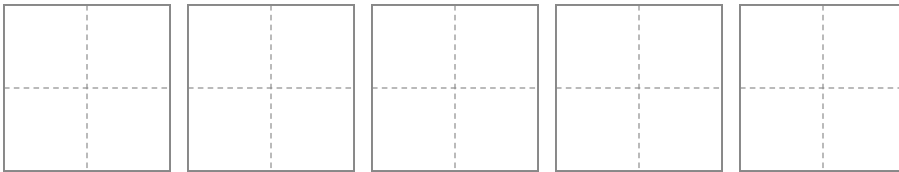


guān
to watch
6 strokes

STROKE ORDER

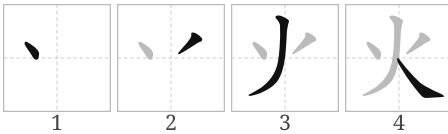


YOUR TURN

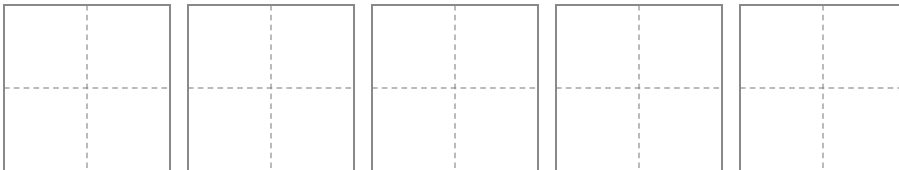


huǒ
fire
4 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



PRACTICE · 隔岸观火 GÉ ÀN GUĀN HUǒ

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

gé	àn	guān	huǒ
隔	岸	观	火

隔岸观火 · Watch the fire from the other bank.

THREE MORE WORDS

duì àn

1 对岸

the other bank.

zhàn zài duì àn kàn huǒ

站 在 对 岸 看 火。

Watch the fire from the other bank.

He was not there. That was the point.

shuō fǎ

2 说法

the story someone tells.

tā men de shuō fǎ lì de zhù shì yīn wèi nǐ zhàn zài duì miàn

他 们 的 说 法 立 得 住 ， 是 因 为 你 站 在 对 面 。

Their story holds because you are standing in front of it.

They will not agree on the colours, or the dates, or who said it first.

jiāo shuǐ

3 胶水

glue.

wài miàn nà ge rén jiù shì jiāo shuǐ. nǐ yì zǒu jiāo shuǐ jiù méi le

外 面 那 个 人 就 是 胶 水 。 你 一 走 ， 胶 水 就 没 了 。

The person outside is the glue. Move away, and the glue is gone.

So the question is not "should I move in". It is "am I the glue".

SPOT IT · STOP IT 识破 · 防住

The third time you ask, it is the same answer. If you keep asking, you will hear it until six. If you stop asking, you do not know what happens next.

退开 <i>Step back: stay nobody</i> wài rén bú zài le 外 人 不 在 了 <i>The outsider is gone</i> jià zì jǐ wǎng xià 价 自 己 往 下 <i>The price goes down by itself</i> shì zì jǐ liǎo 事 自 己 了 <i>The thing settles itself</i>	走进去 <i>Walk in: become the glue</i> xiān hé shǒu 先 合 手 <i>They join hands first</i> zài yì qǐ huí tóu 再 一 起 回 头 <i>Then they turn together</i> zuì hòu yì qǐ jì nǐ 最 后 一 起 记 你 <i>And both remember you</i>
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Two things you can do with a fight that is not yours. One is loud. One is patient. Only one of them costs nothing. So, one line: push, and they stand together; step back, and they turn on each other.

一场不关你的架，你能做两件事。一种响，一种慢；只有一种不要钱。一句话：逼紧，他们站成一排；退开，他们互相撕。

SEVEN DAYS, SEVEN QUESTIONS

Day 1 Who is the glue in a fight you keep stepping into? 胶水 jiāo shuǐ

Day 2 Which answer have you stopped questioning? 答案 dá àn

Day 3 If you stepped back this week, what would finish itself? 退一步 tuì yí bù

Day 4 What is burning that you do not actually need to put out? 火 huǒ

Day 5 Whose story only holds while you are standing in front of it? 说法 shuō fǎ

Day 6 What would you have to stop asking, to find out the truth? 问 wèn

Day 7 Which fight is not yours — and who wants you in it? 架 jià

WEEK 9 REVIEW



Yoko
Read the 36 Stratagems with Yoko

第 9 计 / 36

隔岸观火
gé àn guān huǒ

阳乖序乱，阴以待逆。暴戾恣睢，其势自毙。顺以动豫，豫顺以动。
《三十六计·隔岸观火》

古 THEN	残兵·旧旗·暗城 LOSERS, STILL ARMED	→	西归的回师 NO ARMY, NO ORDERS	→	关城内乱·使者出城 NOT PRESENT, STILL WINNING
理 THE LOGIC	进，还是退 THE OUTSIDER IS THE GLUE	→	第5计 vs 第9计 AM I THE GLUE?		
今 TODAY	同一间会议室 TODAY	→	两个人、一个说法 SAME TWO PEOPLE	→	走廊背对背走开 WHO IS THE GLUE?
正用 DO IT CLEAN	两家供应商 ONE ROOM EACH	→	分别报价 ONE HAS TO BEAT THE OTHER	→	同一单·少一场会 SAME ORDER, FEWER MEETINGS

别当那瓶胶水·DO NOT BE THE GLUE

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

1. In one sentence: why did he turn his army around instead of chasing them?

2. What does 隔岸观火 mean, in your own words?

3. Which of this week's four characters can you write now without looking: 隔, 岸, 观, or 火?

4. Think of two people who agree only while you are in the room. What happens when you leave?

Where are you the glue this week — and what would happen if you stepped back?

这周你在哪儿是那瓶胶水？要是退开，会发生什么？

Zhè zhōu nǐ zài nǎr shì nà píng jiāo shuǐ? Yào shì tuì kāi, huì fā shēng shén me?