The 64 I Ching Hexagrams — Single-Sheet Printable Reference

King Wen sequence (1–64) · 6-line structure ordered from top (Line 6) to bottom (Line 1): ■ = solid yang, ·· = broken yin · Upper over Lower trigrams · Core Meaning.

#	6→1	Hexagram	Trigrams	Meaning
1	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	**Creative** (乾 Qian)	Heaven over Heaven	Initiate
2	·· ·· ·· ·· ·· ··	**Receptive** (坤 Kun)	Earth over Earth	Yield
3	·· ■ ·· ·· ·· ■	**Difficulty at the Beginning** (屯 Zhun)	Water over Thunder	Stall
4	■ ·· ·· ·· ■ ··	**Youthful Folly** (蒙 Meng)	Mountain over Water	Learn
5	·· ■ ·· ■ ■ ■	**Waiting** (需 Xu)	Water over Heaven	Wait
6	■ ■ ■ ·· ■ ··	**Conflict** (讼 Song)	Heaven over Water	Dispute
7	·· ·· ·· ·· ■ ··	**Army** (师 Shi)	Earth over Water	Organize
8	·· ■ ·· ·· ·· ··	**Union** (比 Bi)	Water over Earth	Align
9	■ ■ ·· ■ ■ ■	**Small Restraint** (小畜 Xiao Chu)	Wind over Heaven	Restrain
10	■ ■ ■ ·· ■ ■	**Treading** (履 Lu)	Heaven over Lake	Conduct
11	·· ·· ·· ■ ■ ■	**Peace** (泰 Tai)	Earth over Heaven	Flow
12	■ ■ ■ ·· ·· ··	**Standstill** (否 Pi)	Heaven over Earth	Block
13	■ ■ ■ ■ ·· ■	**Fellowship** (同人 Tong Ren)	Heaven over Fire	Unite
14	■ ·· ■ ■ ■ ■	**Great Possession** (大有 Da You)	Fire over Heaven	Amass
15	·· ·· ·· ■ ·· ··	**Humility** (谦 Qian)	Earth over Mountain	Defer
16	·· ·· ■ ·· ·· ··	**Enthusiasm** (豫 Yu)	Thunder over Earth	Energize
17	·· ■ ■ ·· ·· ■	**Following** (随 Sui)	Lake over Thunder	Follow
18	■ ·· ·· ■ ■ ··	**Decay** (蛊 Gu)	Mountain over Wind	Repair
19	·· ·· ·· ·· ■ ■	**Approach** (临 Lin)	Earth over Lake	Approach
20	■ ■ ·· ·· ·· ··	**Contemplation** (观 Guan)	Wind over Earth	Observe
21	■ ·· ■ ·· ·· ■	**Biting Through** (噬嗑 Shi He)	Fire over Thunder	Bite
22	■ ·· ·· ■ ·· ■	**Grace** (贲 Bi)	Mountain over Fire	Adorn
23	■ ·· ·· ·· ·· ··	**Splitting Apart** (剥 Bo)	Mountain over Earth	Erode
24	·· ·· ·· ·· ·· ■	**Return** (复 Fu)	Earth over Thunder	Return
25	■ ■ ■ ·· ·· ■	**Innocence** (无妄 Wu Wang)	Heaven over Thunder	Purity
26	■ ·· ·· ■ ■ ■	**Great Accumulation** (大畜 Da Chu)	Mountain over Heaven	Store
27	■ ·· ·· ·· ·· ■	**Nourishment** (颐 Yi)	Mountain over Thunder	Nourish
28	·· ■ ■ ■ ■ ··	**Preponderance** (大过 Da Guo)	Lake over Wind	Overload
29	·· ■ ·· ·· ■ ··	**Abyssal Water** (坎 Kan)	Water over Water	Danger
30	■ ·· ■ ■ ·· ■	**Clinging Fire** (离 Li)	Fire over Fire	Attach
31	·· ■ ■ ■ ·· ··	**Mutual Attraction** (咸 Xian)	Lake over Mountain	Attract
32	·· ·· ■ ■ ■ ··	**Duration** (恒 Heng)	Thunder over Wind	Endure
33	■ ■ ■ ■ ·· ··	**Retreat** (遁 Dun)	Heaven over Mountain	Retreat
34	·· ·· ■ ■ ■ ■	**Great Power** (大壮 Da Zhuang)	Thunder over Heaven	Assert
35	■ ·· ■ ·· ·· ··	**Progress** (晋 Jin)	Fire over Earth	Progress
36	·· ·· ·· ■ ·· ■	**Darkening of the Light** (明夷 Ming Yi)	Earth over Fire	Dim
37	■ ■ ·· ■ ·· ■	**Family** (家人 Jia Ren)	Wind over Fire	Order
38	■ ·· ■ ·· ■ ■	**Opposition** (睽 Kui)	Fire over Lake	Diverge
39	·· ■ ·· ■ ·· ··	**Obstruction** (蹇 Jian)	Water over Mountain	Hinder
40	·· ·· ■ ·· ■ ··	**Deliverance** (解 Xie)	Thunder over Water	Release
41	■ ·· ·· ·· ■ ■	**Decrease** (损 Sun)	Mountain over Lake	Reduce
42	■ ■ ·· ·· ·· ■	**Increase** (益 Yi)	Wind over Thunder	Expand
43	·· ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	**Breakthrough** (夬 Guai)	Lake over Heaven	Decide
44	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ··	**Coming to Meet** (姤 Gou)	Heaven over Wind	Meet
45	·· ■ ■ ·· ·· ··	**Gathering** (萃 Cui)	Lake over Earth	Gather
46	·· ·· ·· ■ ■ ··	**Pushing Upward** (升 Sheng)	Earth over Wind	Rise
47	·· ■ ■ ·· ■ ··	**Oppression** (困 Kun)	Lake over Water	Deplete
48	·· ■ ·· ■ ■ ··	**Well** (井 Jing)	Water over Wind	Renew
49	·· ■ ■ ■ ·· ■	**Revolution** (革 Ge)	Lake over Fire	Reform
50	■ ·· ■ ■ ■ ··	**Cauldron** (鼎 Ding)	Fire over Wind	Transform
51	·· ·· ■ ·· ·· ■	**Arousing Thunder** (震 Zhen)	Thunder over Thunder	Startle
52	■ ·· ·· ■ ·· ··	**Keeping Still** (艮 Gen)	Mountain over Mountain	Pause
53	■ ■ ·· ■ ·· ··	**Gradual Progress** (渐 Jian)	Wind over Mountain	Gradual
54	·· ·· ■ ·· ■ ■	**Marrying Maiden** (归妹 Gui Mei)	Thunder over Lake	Compromise
55	·· ·· ■ ■ ·· ■	**Abundance** (丰 Feng)	Thunder over Fire	Peak
56	■ ·· ■ ■ ·· ··	**Wanderer** (旅 Lu)	Fire over Mountain	Wander
57	■ ■ ·· ■ ■ ··	**Gentle Wind** (巽 Xun)	Wind over Wind	Penetrate
58	·· ■ ■ ·· ■ ■	**Joyous Lake** (兑 Dui)	Lake over Lake	Joy
59	■ ■ ·· ·· ■ ··	**Dispersion** (涣 Huan)	Wind over Water	Disperse
60	·· ■ ·· ·· ■ ■	**Limitation** (节 Jie)	Water over Lake	Limit
61	■ ■ ·· ·· ■ ■	**Inner Truth** (中孚 Zhong Fu)	Wind over Lake	Trust
62	·· ·· ■ ■ ·· ··	**Small Preponderance** (小过 Xiao Guo)	Thunder over Mountain	Caution
63	·· ■ ·· ■ ·· ■	**After Completion** (既济 Ji Ji)	Water over Fire	Complete
64	■ ·· ■ ·· ■ ··	**Before Completion** (未济 Wei Ji)	Fire over Water	Unfinished

The Four-Layer Reading Order & Static vs. Moving Distinction

How to convert six lines into one specific, testable judgement — in sequence.

Core Definition: Interpreting the I Ching means converting six lines into one specific judgement: read the primary hexagram, then the trigrams, then the changing lines, then the relating hexagram — in that order.

1. The Four-Layer Interpretation Hierarchy

Layer 1: The Primary Hexagram Reading (Ben Gua)

The six lines you cast form your primary hexagram. It names the objective situation as it stands right now. Its Judgement states the overall condition (whether speech lands, whether large or small steps work), and its Image derives the practical posture required of the decision-maker.

Layer 2: The Upper and Lower Trigrams

Lines 1–3 form the lower (inner) trigram: your internal posture, immediate team, and foundational readiness. Lines 4–6 form the upper (outer) trigram: the external environment, timing, or counter-party posture. Always read Upper over Lower to see how inner disposition meets outer terrain.

Layer 3: The Changing Lines (Dong Yao)

In a three-coin toss (probabilities 1/8, 3/8, 3/8, 1/8 for 6, 7, 8, 9) or 50-stalk yarrow cast (1/16, 5/16, 7/16, 3/16), only lines scoring **6 (old yin)** or **9 (old yang)** move. Stable lines (7 and 8) form the structure, but their line texts remain silent. Changing lines pinpoint where the active friction or transition sits.

Layer 4: The Relating Hexagram (Zhi Gua)

Flipping every changing line into its opposite produces the relating hexagram. It describes the direction the situation is heading and the scale of action the moment permits.

2. Static vs. Moving-Line Readings

- **A Static Cast (0 Changing Lines):** A static hexagram is not an empty reading. It is a reading of the situation as it stands, before anything has begun to move. The Judgement and Image of the primary hexagram are the whole of the reading; do not consult individual line statements, and do not re-cast until you get changing lines.
- **A Cast with Moving Lines:** Has both a starting terrain (primary hexagram) and a directional horizon (relating hexagram). When three lines move, the classical method reads both Judgements in sequence — primary first, relating second.

3. Turning Any Reading Into One Decision (3 Steps)

1. **Separate what the hexagram describes from what you want it to say:** Write your question in one line before opening the text. Then write what the Judgement says about the situation — not your preferred conclusion.
2. **Locate the moving part:** State in one sentence whether you have a static cast (read the primary Judgement and Image) or a moving cast (read the transition from primary to relating).
3. **Convert the reading into one action with a deadline:** An action is real only if (a) you can fail at it ("Ask my future manager why the role is open" vs. "Be more open"), and (b) it fits inside the time window your question created.

Worked Examples: Static vs. Three Changing Lines

Both examples below are composites, written to show the method end to end.

Worked Example 1: A Static Reading (Hexagram 20: Contemplation)

Question: "*I have a job offer on the table, but they want an answer within a week. Should I take it?*"

Cast: Six coin tosses, all 7s and 8s (no changing lines). Primary hexagram: **Hexagram 20, Contemplation** (Wind over Earth, binary 1→6: 000011, core meaning: **Observe**).

Primary Hexagram & Trigrams: Hexagram 20 is built around looking — the moment in a ritual when the washing of hands is complete, the offering has not yet been made, and everyone in the courtyard is watching attentively. Earth below is receptive; Wind above is gradual and penetrating. The old kings travelled through the regions, observed how people actually lived, and only then issued instruction. The model of action is: **survey the ground before you speak.**

What the Reading Says: The hexagram answers a prior question: do you yet know enough about this offer to answer it at all? The gap is not in the offer; it is in her information. It returns a concrete task inside the one-week window: meet the people she would work with, ask the question the interview left open, and find out why the role is open and who held it before. Because the lower trigram is Earth (receptive) and nothing is moving, the decision can be studied rather than rushed.

Worked Example 2: Three Changing Lines (Hexagram 47 → Hexagram 38)

Question: "*Should we move the studio to another city?*" Two founders, four employees, a lease renewal approaching, and an unstated disagreement.

Cast (bottom to top): 6, 7, 8, 7, 9, 6 — Lines 1 (old yin), 5 (old yang), and 6 (old yin) move. Primary hexagram: **Hexagram 47, Oppression** (Lake over Water, 010110, core meaning: **Deplete**). Flipping lines 1, 5, and 6 produces **Hexagram 38, Opposition** (Fire over Lake, 110101, core meaning: **Diverge**).

Primary (47, Oppression): Lake above, Water below — the water has drained below the lake. The situation is depleted, and the crucial line in the judgement states: **when one speaks, one is not believed.** An empty lake with the trigram of the mouth on top: a great deal of talking, with nothing underneath it. The resource that has run out is the founders' ability to be heard by each other.

Relating (38, Opposition): Fire above rises, Lake water below sinks — two forces sharing one space and moving in opposite directions. The judgement states: **in small matters, favorable results.** Not great matters. The image instructs the noble person to hold the group together while letting real differences stand in the open.

Reading Both Judgements Together: With three moving lines, read the primary judgement first and the relating judgement second. Together they show the question is misstated: "Should we move" is a great matter, which 38 declines right now because the blockage is in the founders' conversation (47), not the spreadsheet. The sequenced prescription:

1. **Name the disagreement before the move:** Keep the group together and let the difference stand in the open. Have the conversation neither founder has had.
2. **Do the small things now:** Lease renewal terms, which clients would follow, real costs of both cities. Small matters go well and build shared ground.
3. **Revisit the move once the split is named:** Asked by two people who now understand each other's position, it becomes a different question with a clear answer.