• Cultural Overview
  o Religion
  o Primary language spoken in country
  o Political system of country
  o Other major issues/topics that inform the people who come from this country

Confucianism, socialism, Buddhism, and Taoism are core to Chinese beliefs. Perhaps the greatest influences on today’s education system are Confucianism and socialism. Hui (2005) has asserted that socialism and Confucianism are closely connected in today’s Chinese education system, and he has added that modernization is also having great impact. From Confucian thinking comes emphasis on respect for elders, particularly parents, and regard for the prosperity of the whole community. Chinese views of education emphasize its role in maintaining social harmony; consequently, social norms encourage conformity, diligence, and respectful behavior in schools. Compare that view to, say, American views of competition and American students’ attempts to “stand out.”

The primary language spoken in China is Mandarin, with a sizable minority being Cantonese speakers. These languages are tonal. While many Chinese students study English in their primary or secondary years, typically few outside the elite schools feel they are competent readers, listeners, and speakers of English.

China’s government is communist and led by a 25-member politburo. The Chinese government has increasingly moved toward involvement in the world economic system, and with an increasing interest in joining world trade has come increasing interest in allowing students to study abroad. In addition, many parents believe their children’s employment opportunities increase greatly when they return to China with a degree from an American university, especially a prestigious one. China’s One Child policy may a play a role in the increasing numbers of Chinese students coming to the US. Because parents typically only have one or two children, they may put all of their resources into sending their child or children to highly ranked schools.