

Last Price	Fair Value Estimate	Price/FVE	Market Cap	Economic Moat™	Equity Style Box	Uncertainty	Capital Allocation	ESG Risk Rating Assessment
147.36 USD	258.00 USD	0.57	349.41 USD Bil	Wide	Large Blend	High	Standard	
30 Dec 2025	18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC		31 Dec 2025					3 Dec 2025 06:00, UTC

Fair Value: 258.00  
18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC

Last Close: 147.36

Overvalued  
Undervalued

Year	Price/Fair Value	Total Return %
2020	0.79	9.73
2021	0.63	-48.96
2022	0.49	-25.84
2023	0.61	-10.88
2024	0.85	11.53
YTD	0.57	76.15

Morningstar Rating

★★★★★  
★★★★★  
★★★★★  
★★★★★  
★★★★★

MORNINGSTAR

# Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA ★★★★★ 31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

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Sector	Industry
 Consumer Cyclical	Internet Retail

## Business Description

Alibaba is the world's largest online and mobile commerce company as measured by gross merchandise volume. It operates China's online marketplaces, including Taobao (consumer-to-consumer) and Tmall (business-to-consumer). The China retail e-commerce platform is the most valuable cash flow-generating business at Alibaba. Additional revenue sources include China wholesale e-commerce, international retail and wholesale e-commerce, local consumer services, travel services, cloud computing, digital media and entertainment, Cainiao logistics services, and other businesses.

- ▶ Alibaba delivered on its promise to halve quick commerce unit economics, or UE, losses by October compared with July and August, while maintaining order volume share.
- ▶ Third-party data supports our bullish outlook in Alibaba's AI cloud, as detailed in our report, "Alibaba: China's AI Cloud Giant." On Hugging Face, over 180,000 derivative models had been developed based on Qwen as of Oct. 31, 2025, more than double the second largest peer.

## Business Strategy & Outlook Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 12 Aug 2025

Alibaba is losing market share to PDD and Douyin in the China e-commerce business, and we don't see a quick fix in the near term. Alibaba's number of annual active consumers in the China retail marketplace was surpassed by PDD in the fiscal year ended March 2021. Meanwhile, Douyin has gained share from Alibaba, especially in the beauty and apparel categories in recent years, and entered the traditional search-based e-commerce space, competing directly with Alibaba. The number of annual active consumers at Alibaba is close to the ceiling in China. Alibaba's gross merchandise volume to China's online retail sales of goods ratio was 62% in the year ended March 2023 at Alibaba, down from 72% in the year-ago period. We believe Alibaba's marketplace monetization rates will decline in the long run, due to a mix shift toward Taobao, which has a lower take rate compared with Tmall, and more competition.

In our view, the Taobao and Tmall marketplaces remain as Alibaba's core cash flow driver and can support the expansion of AliCloud as well as the firm's globalization strategy, which offers long-term growth potential. While AliCloud will remain in investment mode in the medium term, downsizing low-margin businesses can drive segment margins higher over time. On globalization, the Alibaba international digital commerce group's year-on-year revenue growth has been strong recently, thanks to AliExpress' expanding cross-border business.

We expect Alibaba to return more capital to shareholders and increase its return on invested capital after divestments of noncore investments. We are pleased that Alibaba has upsized its share-repurchase program by USD 25 billion until March-end 2027 to USD 35.3 billion. Management targets to lift ROIC (based on Alibaba's calculation) from single digits in fiscal 2023 to double digits in the next few years. Alibaba had sizable cash and equivalents and investments of CNY 829 billion on its balance sheet as of December 2023.

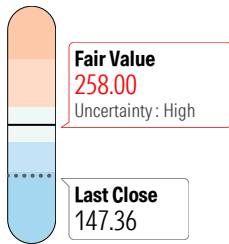
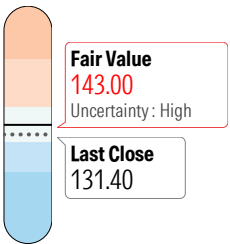
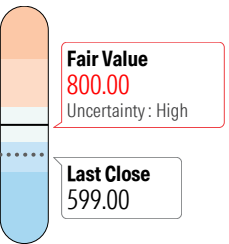
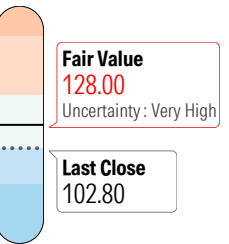
## Bulls Say Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 26 Nov 2025

- ▶ Alibaba is able to maintain or increase its gross merchandise volume share in China's e-commerce space, demonstrating its ability to execute its turnaround strategy.
- ▶ Alibaba successfully increases key metrics such as customer retention, purchase frequency, and average order value, driving GMV growth to outperform the growth of China's online retail sales of physical goods.

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## Competitors

	Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA	Baidu Inc 09888	Tencent Holdings Ltd 00700	Meituan Class B 03690
				
Economic Moat	Wide	Wide	Wide	Narrow
Currency	USD	HKD	HKD	HKD
Fair Value	258.00 18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC	143.00 22 May 2025 10:36, UTC	800.00 14 Aug 2025 02:20, UTC	128.00 18 Nov 2025 13:17, UTC
1-Star Price	399.90	221.65	1,240.00	224.00
5-Star Price	154.80	85.80	480.00	64.00
Assessment	Undervalued 31 Dec 2025	Fairly Valued 31 Dec 2025	Undervalued 31 Dec 2025	Undervalued 31 Dec 2025
Morningstar Rating	★★★★★ 31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC	★★★ 31 Dec 2025 17:21, UTC	★★★★★ 31 Dec 2025 17:10, UTC	★★★★★ 31 Dec 2025 17:21, UTC
Analyst	Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst	Kai Wang, Senior Equity Analyst	Ivan Su, Senior Equity Analyst	Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst
Capital Allocation	Standard	Standard	Exemplary	Standard
Price/Fair Value	0.57	0.92	0.75	0.80
Price/Sales	2.52	2.53	7.34	1.65
Price/Book	2.42	1.23	4.22	3.48
Price/Earning	19.07	11.95	21.19	23.23
Dividend Yield	0.71%	0.00%	0.75%	0.00%
Market Cap	349.41 Bil	361.37 Bil	5,405.54 Bil	627.79 Bil
52-Week Range	80.06—192.67	73.25—141.40	365.60—683.00	94.05—189.60
Investment Style	Large Blend	Large Blend	Large Blend	Large Blend

► Alibaba delivers better-than-expected adjusted EBITA margins despite competition and reinvestment.

### Bears Say Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 26 Nov 2025

- Alibaba's GMV share in China decreases faster than we expect as competitors such as Douyin successfully enter the search-based e-commerce business.
- Expansion into the nonphysical goods marketplace businesses and other regions leads to lower-than-expected margins, and the timing of profitability is delayed.
- Alibaba fails in its globalization, public cloud, and AI efforts and delivers slower-than-expected earnings growth.

### Economic Moat Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 26 Sep 2025

Despite increasing competition, we're maintaining our wide economic moat rating based on Alibaba's strong network effect, where the value of the platform to consumers increases with a greater number of

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sellers and vice versa. Alibaba is monetizing its network effect better than any other e-commerce platform in China. The short video platforms Douyin and Kuaishou have not proved they can monetize the physical goods e-commerce market with a durable profit margin, but Alibaba has been profitable for a decade, and we believe it will remain profitable for the next 20 years. In addition, we think that the livestreaming e-commerce that Kuaishou and Douyin offer is a supplement to e-commerce offerings, not a replacement of the mainstream e-commerce platforms. Livestreaming e-commerce tends to satisfy impulsive purchases instead of planned or urgent purchases. The return and refund ratio of livestreaming is high, which we think is inherent in its impulse purchase nature; this makes it difficult for brands to rely on this channel solely in the long term.

Even if these new competitors are successful in generating long-term durable profit, we still see Alibaba remaining as a key e-commerce marketplace for consumers due to its vast range of stock-keeping units, logistics infrastructure, operational expertise (governance of products and merchants, protection of consumers), and tools for merchants to manage full product lifecycles. It is the largest e-commerce platform that provides its merchants with predictability in sales and production volume, which leads to predictable production costs. There were over 124 million active consumers who spent over CNY 10,000 on Taobao and Tmall in fiscal 2022 (ended March) and fiscal 2023, respectively, while the retention rate of these consumers stayed at a similar level in fiscal 2023 as compared with the 98% in fiscal 2022. Alibaba has solutions for diversifying consumption scenarios like on-demand delivery, online-to-offline, offline, and content e-commerce. We think Alibaba will always have its place in China's increasingly complex retail market.

Alibaba continues to most effectively monetize the network in terms of gross merchandise volume and margin, in our estimate. This should last for the next 20 years. According to Analysys, a data analytics company, Alibaba's China commerce retail business was the largest in the world in terms of GMV in the 12 months ended March 2023. We estimate Alibaba's Taobao and Tmall Group's adjusted EBIT margin was 46% in the September quarter of 2023, higher than JD Retail's 5.2% EBIT margin and PDD's 26.3% non-GAAP EBIT margin during the same period. Even though we think there will be a decline in Alibaba's adjusted EBIT margin in the marketplace businesses in the next five years due to reinvestment in the Taobao and Tmall business, we don't think this will be significant enough to reduce Alibaba's return on invested capital to below that of Pinduoduo and JD Retail.

We don't see key competitors PDD and Douyin registering higher adjusted operating margins than Alibaba in the foreseeable future. PDD's strategy has shifted to focus more on research and development—such as in technology and marketing tools—from a previous focus on sales and marketing in the first five years of the company's history. It started its global e-commerce platform Temu to take on Shein. Management also reiterated the importance of investing in businesses such as Temu and in technology, while profitability is not the priority for now. These will offset the margin improvement from increasing the monetization rate of the Pinduoduo platform. These lead us to think

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that Pinduoduo's adjusted EBIT margin is likely to be lower than 40% on a full-year basis in our next five-year forecast period. On the other hand, ByteDance is competing with many internet companies on many new fronts—cloud, business services, search, and e-commerce. There is no detail on its 2023 profit level as it is a private company. It is unclear if ByteDance's China e-commerce segment will be able to register profit consistently, in our view. In addition, a successful e-commerce company cannot only rely on online traffic to succeed. Customer service; governance of e-commerce platforms to balance the interests of merchants and consumers, such as the management of issues like false advertisement and promises, and formulating return policies; the supply chain; logistics; and merchant support are critical as well.

We think the livestreaming e-commerce that Kuaishou and Douyin offer is a supplement to the e-commerce offerings, not a replacement of the mainstream e-commerce platforms. These newer platforms monetize their network of users mainly by content e-commerce—that is, content such as short videos or livestreaming—or interest e-commerce, which is selling products by understanding and predicting users' interests. Key opinion leaders and livestreaming hosts on these short video platforms conduct livestreaming sessions to sell products online. Livestreaming e-commerce tends to satisfy impulse purchases instead of planned or urgent purchases. The return and refund ratio of livestreaming is higher, which we think is inherent in its impulse purchase nature, which makes it difficult for brands to rely on this channel solely in the long term. As per the 2020 livestreaming e-commerce white paper published by Xiaohulu, a livestreaming e-commerce service provider, the livestreaming industry's return rate can be as high as 30%-40%, much higher than the traditional online sales return ratio of 10%-15%. The return rate of the leading livestreaming hosts is 10%-15%. We don't think the return rate has improved significantly over the years. According to e-commerce insight provider DongGelieDuDianShang, Douyin e-commerce's 2022 Double 11 Shopping Festival return rate was at least 40%. Meanwhile, Kuaishou's most famous key opinion leader, Xinba, who generated CNY 9.6 billion of paid GMV in the month of October 2023, disclosed that the return rate was 42% in the same month. We think the impulse purchase nature of livestreaming should keep the return rate higher than that of traditional e-commerce. The uncertainty in sales volume makes it difficult for established brands to plan production volume, which makes it difficult to achieve economies of scale. Such merchants wouldn't rely on content e-commerce companies as their sole e-commerce channel. Thanks to the support of venture capitalists in China, new brands can spend generously on advertising dollars on the short video platforms to get brand exposure and sell their products, but maintaining the GMV of these brands is questionable if they reduce their advertising spending on these platforms.

Short-form video platforms Douyin and Kuaishou have entered the e-commerce arena with quick GMV growth, but we see less significant growth opportunities for livestreaming e-commerce in the future. Douyin's GMV was up 80% year on year to CNY 2.1 trillion, and Kuaishou's GMV rose 31% to CNY 1.2 trillion in 2023, based on our estimate. Livestreaming e-commerce GMV was estimated to be CNY 4.6

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trillion in 2023 as per data analytics firm DianShuBao, about 31.9% of the China internet shopping market, which is already high in terms of penetration. Meanwhile, Double 11 Shopping Festival livestreaming GMV year-on-year growth in 2023 slowed to 19% from 146% in the same period in 2022, per data analytics firm Syntun. In our opinion, Douyin and Kuaishou will need to be successful in traditional search-based e-commerce in order to overtake the incumbents.

Anticompetitive exclusivity arrangements between merchants and Alibaba are a key environmental, social, and governance risk. We think the end of exclusive merchants on Alibaba's platform has some but not significant impact on Alibaba's wide moat, and we have accounted for the share loss in GMV to other platforms in our forecasts.

## Fair Value and Profit Drivers Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 26 Nov 2025

Our fair value estimate is USD 258 per ADS or HKD 251 per share.

Alibaba's ratio of China retail marketplace gross merchandise volume to China retail sales of consumer goods is expected to decline gradually in the medium term, on our estimate. Considering intensive competition, we assume monetization of the China retail marketplace to be flattish after an increase due to the rollout of Quanzhantui and Quick Commerce.

Our forecast 10-year compound annual growth rate for total revenue is 10%. We assume 10-year revenue CAGRs of 7% in the new segment Alibaba China e-commerce group formed in fiscal 2026, 7% in international digital commerce, and 29% in cloud intelligence. Our 10-year adjusted EBITA CAGR estimate is 13% as we expect a faster turnaround of loss-making businesses and rising cloud margin to offset the negative impact from defending market share in China e-commerce.

## Risk and Uncertainty Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 26 Sep 2025

We assign Alibaba a High Morningstar Uncertainty Rating. China's e-commerce landscape has become increasingly competitive, with Pinduoduo registering faster GMV and user growth than Alibaba and JD.com demonstrating its quality services amid covid-19. Short video platforms and Tencent have also entered the e-commerce sector. Pinduoduo's number of active buyers in the year ended December 2020 already surpassed that of Alibaba.

The largest material environmental, social, and governance issue for Alibaba is its business ethics with regard to anticompetitive measures. It was fined CNY 18.2 billion in April 2021 for forcing merchants to choose its platform exclusively and required to curb its anticompetitive behavior. Financial regulators in China have continuously scrutinized online financial services, leading to the cancellation of investee Ant's IPO. Alibaba has persistently faced the issue of counterfeit and infringing goods on its marketplaces. The Hangzhou government's assigning of representatives to work inside Alibaba also raises concerns, although there is no evidence of value destruction for Alibaba.

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Expansion into peripheral businesses might distract management and reduce profitability without materially improving Alibaba's ecosystem. While we're optimistic about Alibaba's ability to become a preferred partner for international retailers and consumer brands looking to sell in China, the firm does not enjoy the same network effect and brand recognition in other countries, and it may face challenges directly expanding in these markets.

Another ESG issue is corporate governance. In 2011, the company transferred the ownership of Alipay to a new company (now called Ant, which is 33% owned by Alibaba) without the approval of key shareholders Yahoo and SoftBank.

## Capital Allocation Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 26 Sep 2025

We assign Alibaba a Standard Morningstar Capital Allocation Rating.

The shareholder distribution policy of Alibaba is conservative despite a sound balance sheet with a net cash position. Alibaba had sizable cash and equivalents and investments of CNY 829 billion on its balance sheet as of December 2023. While we are pleased that Alibaba approved the first annual dividend of USD 1 per ADS for fiscal 2023, it translated to a low dividend yield. In 2023, Alibaba repurchased approximately 3.3% of the ordinary shares issued and outstanding. We are pleased with Alibaba's decision to upsize its share-repurchase program to March-end 2027 by USD 25 billion to USD 35.3 billion. Alibaba is also committed to reducing share count by at least 3% per year in the next three fiscal years. In our view, Alibaba has room to increase its return to shareholders.

Return on invested capital excluding idle cash and investments fell from fiscal 2018's 29% to fiscal 2023's 15% as the firm has invested heavily in emerging businesses for future growth at the expense of margin. As a comparison, wide-moat-rated Tencent also saw a reduction in adjusted ROIC from 2016's 369% to 30% in 2022.

We believe management has delivered mixed results when it comes to its investment. The prime example is its inability to maintain its gross merchandise volume share in China's retail marketplace. The GMV to China's online retail sales of goods ratio was 62% in the year ended March 2023 for Alibaba, down from 72% in the year-ago period, due to competition. Additionally, we think Alibaba's food delivery business in the local consumer services group, digital media and entertainment group, and Southeast Asia e-commerce businesses in the international digital commerce group lag its competitors while generating losses. The local consumer services group, digital media and entertainment group, and international digital commerce group represented negative 14%, negative 10%, and negative 11%, respectively, of Alibaba's adjusted EBITA in the 2023 December quarter. Meanwhile, its local consumer services group competitor, Meituan, is profitable. Despite being the early mover in Southeast Asian E-commerce, Lazada's (under international digital commerce) gross merchandise volume share in Indonesia (the largest e-commerce market with a majority of GMV market share in the region) was only 10% in 2022, versus 36% for latecomer Shopee and 35% for Tokopedia. Adjusted EBITA margin dwindled



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to 20% in the December 2023 quarter from 26.9% in fiscal 2020, while revenue growth also moderated to 5% year on year in the December 2023 quarter compared with 35% in fiscal 2020. On the other hand, we like Alibaba's investment in Cainiao to improve the delivery quality of its e-commerce goods. Meanwhile, the company started its cloud business in China in 2009, earlier than competitor Tencent. Alibaba announced in October 2023 that it had been the world's third-largest infrastructure-as-a-service provider by revenue for the fifth consecutive year with a market share of 7.7% in 2022, per Gartner.

We expect Alibaba's adjusted EBITA margin to decline in the next 10 years, mainly due to investments in its retail business, which we think is necessary to maintain its competitiveness amid heavy investments among its Chinese e-commerce peers. These investments will go into technology, merchant support, user acquisition, user experience enhancement, improving the supply chain, and merchandising for high-frequency categories.

We are not giving Alibaba a Poor Capital Allocation Rating because the firm is returning capital to shareholders by monetizing its noncore assets. For instance, Alibaba sold some shares of GoGoX and Xpeng. Based on Alibaba's calculation, ROIC was single digits in fiscal 2023, and Alibaba is working to increase ROIC to double digits in the next few years.

## Analyst Notes Archive

### Alibaba: Increasing Investment as AI Infrastructure Demand Exceeds Expectations; Valuation Rises 49% Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 26 Sep 2025

Alibaba will increase capital expenditure beyond the committed CNY 380 billion as AI infrastructure demand is exceeding expectations. It anticipates its global data center energy use to be 10 times above the 2022 level by 2032 and will partner with Nvidia to build physical AI capabilities. Why it matters: We think higher capex is essential to meet the stronger-than-expected demand for artificial intelligence infrastructure domestically and internationally. The projected surge in global data center energy consumption signals a robust outlook for cloud revenue. The physical AI collaboration will drive AI adoption across industries such as auto and robotics. Alibaba's increased investment in overseas data centers, competitive performance, widespread use of its open-source models, and improved performance of its self-developed chip all support cloud revenue growth. We now assume capex will average 15% of revenue over the next three years, resulting in an 11% average lift in cloud revenue over the coming decade versus previous forecasts. A higher contribution from high-margin AI revenue led to a 12% average increase in our adjusted EBITA estimates. The bottom line: We raise wide-moat Alibaba's fair value estimate by 49% to USD 267/HKD 260, reflecting stronger cloud profits, higher stage two assumptions due to AI demand, and a reduced holding discount on noncurrent investments to 10% from 30%. The shares appear undervalued. As of the June quarter, Alibaba's cash and investments accounted for 49% of its current market capitalization. The firm divested stakes in noncore businesses,



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increased dividend payouts, and repurchased shares in fiscal 2024-25, leading to the reduced holding discount. Alibaba's aggressive AI investment strategy, strong capabilities and market share in AI cloud, leadership in open-source models, and full-stack AI infrastructure position it well to capture robust AI demand growth in China and, to a lesser extent, internationally.

Alibaba: AI and Customer Management Revenue Growth Drive 17% Valuation Increase Chelsey Tam,Senior Equity Analyst,9 Sep 2025

Alibaba expects a higher cloud growth rate over the next few quarters. The penetration rate of Quanzhantui, or QZT, a marketing tool that boosts customer management revenue, or CMR, continued to rise in August.Why it matters: We raise our 2025 cloud revenue growth forecast to 30%, higher than the 26% in the June quarter, driven by new demand from the automotive, education, and multimedia industries, which are training proprietary models using their own data. Additional demand is emerging from the education and healthcare sectors, as well as from companies developing tools that leverage Alibaba's open-source model for artificial intelligence training. We also increase our forecast for high-margin CMR growth to 10% for fiscal 2026 (ending March), in line with guidance. We estimate PDD Holding's QZT penetration ratio reached 80%, three years after its mid-2022 launch. Alibaba's QZT has been in deployment for about one year and four months, with a penetration rate of around 30% as of April. We believe Alibaba's penetration ratio still has room to grow. The bottom line: We increase wide-moat Alibaba's fair value estimate by 17% to USD 179 per ADS or HKD 175 per share. We believe the shares are undervalued, as the market has yet to fully reflect Alibaba's AI cloud potential and the current management's ability to enhance competitiveness. We lift our adjusted EBITA forecasts by 4%-30% over the next decade, reflecting stronger contribution from CMR and cloud revenue, as well as improved profitability at Alibaba International Digital Commerce, or AIDC. Notably, our midcycle adjusted EBITA estimate rises by 28%. AIDC reduced its adjusted EBITA loss margin to negative 0.2% in the June quarter, and Alibaba aims to make AIDC profitable. Key stats: According to IDC's August report, Alibaba held a 24.6% market share in China's AI public cloud services in 2024, ranking number one for the second consecutive year. The overall market grew 55% in 2024.

Alibaba Earnings: First Battle in Scaling Quick Commerce Won; Raising Efficiency Is Next Chelsey Tam,Senior Equity Analyst,1 Sep 2025

Alibaba expects to generate CNY 1 trillion annualized incremental gross merchandise volume from quick commerce within the next three years. Cloud revenue growth accelerated to 26% year on year in the June quarter from 18% in the prior quarter. Customer management revenue grew 10%. Why it matters: Our back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that quick commerce could add over 11% to Alibaba's traditional e-commerce GMV. Assuming a 2%-3% adjusted EBITA/quick commerce GMV ratio, adjusted EBITDA could increase by at least 9%-14% in fiscal 2029 (ending March). The cloud revenue growth reaffirms our bullish outlook, as detailed in our report, 'Alibaba: China's AI Cloud Giant.' We

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expect cloud revenue growth to accelerate over the next two years, driven by solid demand for artificial intelligence services, Alibaba's full-stack capabilities, and improving model performance. In the next few quarters, Alibaba anticipates CMR growth of 10% year on year, supported by rising Quanzhantui penetration and a higher take rate (CMR/GMV) fueled by the traffic generated from quick commerce. The bottom line: We maintain our forecasts and fair value estimate for wide-moat Alibaba at USD 153 per ADS (HKD 152 per share). The shares are undervalued, as the market continues to underestimate both Alibaba's cloud business and the current management's strong execution capabilities. We believe Alibaba has leveraged its ecosystem resources far more effectively than in previous food delivery competitions, increasing its chances of gaining market share and achieving profitability in the medium term. We now see growing competitive pressure on Meituan and JD.com in the quick commerce space. Coming up: Alibaba expects its quick commerce unit economics loss (loss per order) to halve within the next two months, while keeping an average of 80 million daily orders, through reduced advertising, an increased mix of higher-value meals and non-food orders, and lower logistic costs.

## Alibaba: Reducing Valuation by 2% Due to Higher Competition in On-Demand Delivery Chelsey

Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 29 Aug 2025

On July 2, Alibaba announced a CNY 50 billion subsidy for on-demand delivery over the next 12 months. Despite regulatory guidance in May and July urging rational competition and compliance, Alibaba continued aggressive promotional efforts. Why it matters: Compared with former CEO Daniel Zhang, we think current CEO Eddie Wu is more determined to capture market share in food delivery and on-demand retail from Meituan. Alibaba aims to evolve from a traditional e-commerce platform to a comprehensive consumer ecosystem. In June, Alibaba merged its food delivery platform, Ele.me, and online travel agency, Fliggy, into Alibaba China E-commerce Group. Ele.me and Fliggy now align their strategies and execution with the broader goals of the China e-commerce unit and will report to the head of the China e-commerce unit. We cut adjusted EBITA forecasts for fiscal 2026-28 (ending March) by 2%-23% to reflect higher subsidies. However, we expect earnings to rebound strongly after the subsidy war, which we expect will end before fiscal 2028. The bottom line: We reduce our fair value estimate for wide-moat Alibaba by 2% to USD 153 per ADS or HKD 152 per share. Despite this, Alibaba's shares are undervalued. We think the market appears overly focused on near-term earnings pressure from subsidies and overlooks Alibaba's long-term competitiveness. To compete effectively in China's mature online retail market, we believe Alibaba will need to invest more aggressively than previously. Hence, we do not expect earnings from its China e-commerce and local services group to return to pre-subsidy-war levels. Key stats: We expect Alibaba to spend CNY 50 billion in subsidies in fiscal 2026 and CNY 23 billion in fiscal 2027.

## Alibaba Earnings: Results In Line, With Cloud Business to Drive Growth; Valuation Intact Chelsey

Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 16 May 2025

Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA ★★★★★

31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

Last Price	Fair Value Estimate	Price/FVE	Market Cap	Economic Moat™	Equity Style Box	Uncertainty	Capital Allocation	ESG Risk Rating Assessment¹
147.36 USD 30 Dec 2025	258.00 USD 18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC	0.57	349.41 USD Bil 31 Dec 2025	Wide	Large Blend	High	Standard	 3 Dec 2025 06:00, UTC

Alibaba's March-quarter cloud revenue grew 18% year on year. Taobao and Tmall Group customer management revenue growth accelerated to 12%. The cloud business' adjusted EBITA margin fell to 8.0% from 9.9% last quarter due to higher investments. Why it matters: The results met Refinitiv consensus. A 0.6% software fee was introduced on Taobao in September 2024. Initially, Alibaba provided rebates and supportive measures to merchants, but these will be phased out in 2025. This should support monetization from software fees beyond September 2025. We estimate that the rising adoption of Quanzhantui, launched in April 2024, should help Alibaba enhance monetization until fiscal 2026 (ending March), similar to the two years of monetization growth that PDD Holdings experienced after introducing Quanzhantui in 2022. We expect adjusted EBITA margin for Alibaba's cloud business to stay at high single digits in the coming year. We think lower utilizations should offset the positive impact of a higher mix of higher-margin artificial intelligence revenue. The bottom line: We maintain our USD 150/HKD 146 fair value estimate for wide-moat Alibaba. The shares now appear fairly valued. Long view: Given the company's aggressive AI and cloud capital expenditures to meet excess demand, its leading public cloud market share, and its strong AI revenue growth potential, we remain optimistic about Alibaba's cloud business outlook. Key stats: In 2023, Alibaba held the fourth-largest global market share in public cloud infrastructure as a service at 7.9%, just behind Google's 8.2%, according to Gartner.

Heated Competition Reduces Valuations for Meituan and Alibaba; JD.com Unchanged Chelsey Tam, Senior Equity Analyst, 6 May 2025

Per Leifengwang, Meituan instashopping's computers, communications, and consumer electronics home appliance orders were half of JD.com's in 2024. Its alcohol, water, snacks, and dairy orders exceeded JD's. Taobao upgraded its on-demand delivery feature and launched a CNY 10 billion subsidy program. Why it matters: Meituan's instashopping threatens JD's stronghold in the high-tier cities, electronics, and supermarket categories. In Shenzhen, its instashopping daily average order volume exceeded that of JD's e-commerce, 7Fresh, and non-food and beverage on-demand delivery Miasong orders combined. We think this threat has led JD to enter the high-purchase-frequency food delivery market to increase its user base and engagement for its traditional and on-demand retail businesses. The move should also drive down unit costs for its on-demand business in the long run. Alibaba's e-commerce segment faces the same threat from Meituan's instashopping. Cash-rich Alibaba's entry into the on-demand delivery turf war amplifies the competitive pressure on Meituan and reduces its resources for expanding its on-demand retail business. The bottom line: We keep our USD 70/HKD 272 fair value estimate and forecasts intact for JD; we believe the shares are cheap. We factor in heavy investment in food delivery, offset by benefits from the national trade-in subsidy. We assume 4% EBIT growth and a 20-basis-point decline in EBIT margin in 2025. We have reduced our fair value estimate for wide-moat Alibaba by 8%, to USD 150/HKD 145 per share, on the launch of subsidies by the local services segment's Eleme and Taobao. We cut our forecast for fiscal 2026-34 adjusted EBITA by 5%-9%.

Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA★★★★★

31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

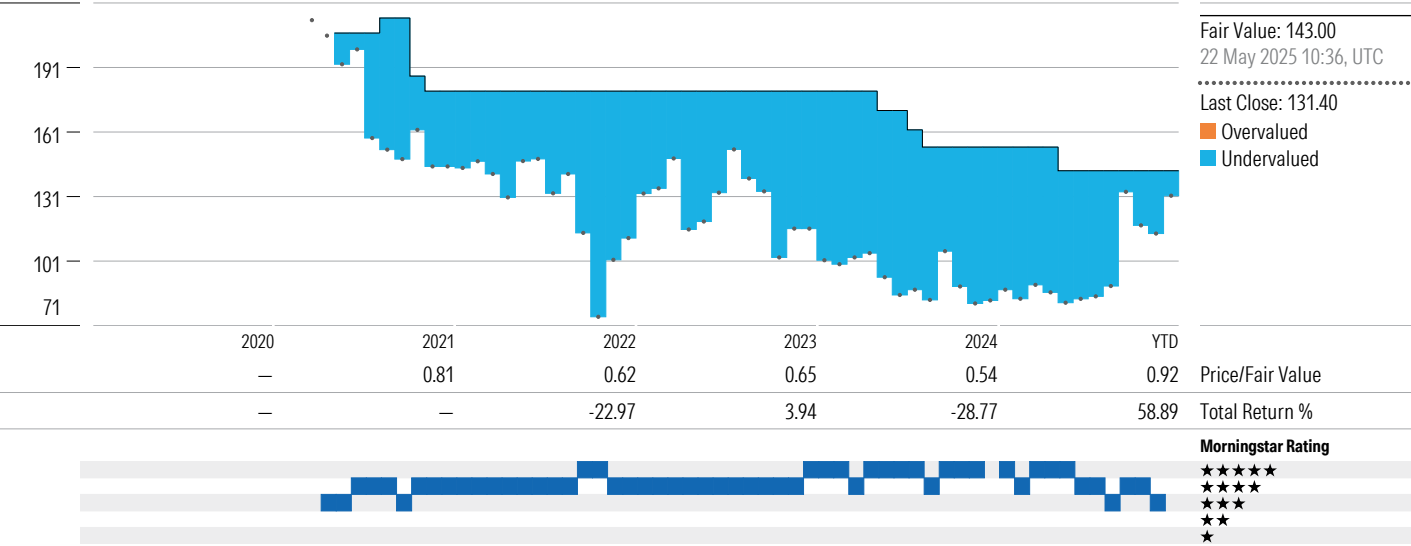
Last Price	Fair Value Estimate	Price/FVE	Market Cap	Economic Moat™	Equity Style Box	Uncertainty	Capital Allocation	ESG Risk Rating Assessment¹
147.36 USD	258.00 USD	0.57	349.41 USD Bil	 Wide	 Large Blend	High	Standard	
30 Dec 2025	18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC		31 Dec 2025					3 Dec 2025 06:00, UTC

Alibaba shares still appear undervalued. We cut our fair value estimate for narrow-moat Meituan by 9% to HKD 164 per share. The shares are fairly valued, in our view. We cut our core EBIT forecast by 11%-23% for 2025-33 to factor in higher competitive pressure. ■■■

# Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA ★★★★★ 31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

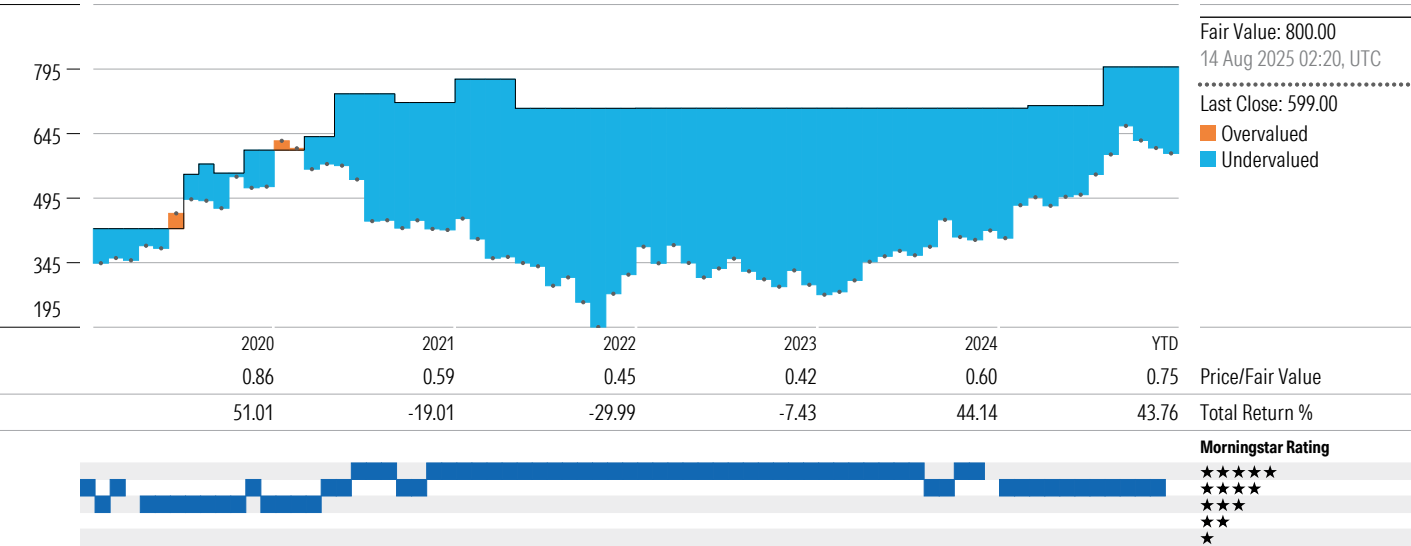
## Competitors Price vs. Fair Value

### Baidu Inc 09888



Total Return % as of 31 Dec 2025. Last Close as of 31 Dec 2025. Fair Value as of 22 May 2025 10:36, UTC.

### Tencent Holdings Ltd 00700



Total Return % as of 31 Dec 2025. Last Close as of 31 Dec 2025. Fair Value as of 14 Aug 2025 02:20, UTC.



# Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA ★★★★★

31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

Last Price	Fair Value Estimate	Price/FVE	Market Cap	Economic Moat™	Equity Style Box	Uncertainty	Capital Allocation	ESG Risk Rating Assessment¹
147.36 USD 30 Dec 2025	258.00 USD 18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC	0.57	349.41 USD Bil 31 Dec 2025	Wide	Large Blend	High	Standard	 3 Dec 2025 06:00, UTC

## Morningstar Valuation Model Summary

### Financials as of 26 Nov 2025

Fiscal Year, ends 31 Mar	Actual			Forecast				
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Revenue (CNY Mil)	867,098	941,168	996,347	1,028,273	1,137,143	1,258,631	1,388,154	1,539,484
Operating Income (CNY Mil)	101,476	123,871	146,315	112,744	180,970	203,356	232,912	258,451
EBITDA (CNY Mil)	119,475	132,656	200,984	162,712	251,021	292,130	338,261	365,705
Adjusted EBITDA (CNY Mil)	100,351	113,350	140,905	113,041	180,970	203,356	232,912	258,451
Net Income (CNY Mil)	70,920	79,741	128,709	96,941	147,978	164,364	186,597	208,142
Adjusted Net Income (CNY Mil)	141,379	157,479	158,122	111,861	169,696	185,738	208,938	232,388
Free Cash Flow To The Firm (CNY Mil)	180,513	160,781	7,563	-47,752	50,549	90,625	211,481	243,468
Weighted Average Diluted Shares Outstanding (Bil)	21	20	19	19	18	18	18	17
Earnings Per Share (Diluted) (CNY)	3.36	3.92	6.66	5.14	8.03	9.14	10.64	12.18
Adjusted Earnings Per Share (Diluted) (CNY)	6.70	7.74	8.19	5.93	9.21	10.33	11.91	13.59
Dividends Per Share (CNY)	0.00	0.13	0.13	0.70	1.11	1.26	1.47	1.68

### Margins & Returns as of 26 Nov 2025

	3 Year Avg	Actual			Forecast					5 Year Avg
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Operating Margin %	11.2	11.7	13.2	14.7	11.0	15.9	16.2	16.8	16.8	15.9
EBITDA Margin %	—	13.8	14.1	20.2	15.8	22.1	23.2	24.4	23.8	—
Adjusted EBITDA Margin %	—	11.6	12.0	14.1	11.0	15.9	16.2	16.8	16.8	15.3
Net Margin %	9.9	8.2	8.5	12.9	9.4	13.0	13.1	13.4	13.5	12.5
Adjusted Net Margin %	16.3	16.3	16.7	15.9	10.9	14.9	14.8	15.0	15.1	14.1
Free Cash Flow To The Firm Margin %	12.9	20.8	17.1	0.8	-4.6	4.5	7.2	15.2	15.8	7.6

### Growth & Ratios as of 26 Nov 2025

	3 Year CAGR	Actual			Forecast					5 Year CAGR
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Revenue Growth %	5.3	1.7	8.5	5.9	3.2	10.6	10.7	10.3	10.9	9.1
Operating Income Growth %	15.6	7.1	22.1	18.1	-22.9	60.5	12.4	14.5	11.0	12.0
EBITDA Growth %	22.3	4.4	11.0	51.5	-19.0	54.3	16.4	15.8	8.1	15.1
Adjusted EBITDA Growth %	26.5	44.1	13.0	24.3	-19.8	60.1	12.4	14.5	11.0	12.9
Earnings Per Share Growth %	32.8	18.1	16.6	70.1	-22.9	56.3	13.8	16.4	14.5	12.8
Adjusted Earnings Per Share Growth %	32.8	7.0	15.5	5.8	-27.6	55.4	12.2	15.3	14.1	12.8

### Valuation as of 26 Nov 2025

	Actual			Forecast				
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Price/Earning	13.1	1.2	14.6	21.6	13.9	12.4	10.8	9.4
Price/Sales	2.1	0.2	2.3	2.4	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.6
Price/Book	1.9	0.2	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.6
Price/Cash Flow	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EV/EBITDA	14.4	1.0	16.1	20.8	13.0	11.6	10.1	9.1
EV/EBIT	14.2	0.9	15.5	20.9	13.0	11.6	10.1	9.1
Dividend Yield %	—	1.4	0.1	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.3
Dividend Payout %	0.0	9.3	12.0	11.8	12.0	12.2	12.3	12.4
Free Cash Flow Yield %	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

### Operating Performance / Profitability as of 26 Nov 2025

Fiscal Year, ends 31 Mar	Actual			Forecast				
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
ROA %	4.1	4.5	7.1	5.5	7.9	8.2	8.7	9.0
ROE %	6.3	7.2	11.9	8.9	12.9	13.5	14.3	14.8
ROIC %	21.4	45.4	63.4	36.3	38.8	35.5	38.7	46.1



# Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA ★★★★★

31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

Last Price	Fair Value Estimate	Price/FVE	Market Cap	Economic Moat™	Equity Style Box	Uncertainty	Capital Allocation	ESG Risk Rating Assessment¹
147.36 USD 30 Dec 2025	258.00 USD 18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC	0.57	349.41 USD Bil 31 Dec 2025	Wide	Large Blend	High	Standard	3 Dec 2025 06:00, UTC

## Financial Leverage (Reporting Currency)

Fiscal Year, ends 31 Mar	Actual			Forecast				
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Debt/Capital %	42.5	53.4	44.3	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.5
Assets/Equity	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Net Debt/EBITDA	-2.8	-2.8	-0.9	-0.8	-0.4	-0.2	-0.5	-0.8
Total Debt/EBITDA	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.1	1.0	0.8	0.8
EBITDA/ Net Interest Expense	-14.3	-19.9	-66.0	-105.7	305.1	119.4	97.4	-6,150.2

## Forecast Revisions as of 26 Nov 2025

Prior data as of 18 Nov 2025	2026		2027		2028	
	Current	Prior	Current	Prior	Current	Prior
Fair Value Estimate Change (Trading Currency)	258.00	258.23	—	—	—	—
Revenue (CNY Mil)	1,028,273	1,009,691	1,137,143	1,119,561	1,258,631	1,241,388
Operating Income (CNY Mil)	112,744	126,849	180,970	194,722	203,356	215,362
EBITDA (CNY Mil)	113,041	126,998	180,970	194,722	203,356	215,362
Net Income (CNY Mil)	111,861	118,192	169,696	179,449	185,738	194,201
Earnings Per Share (Diluted) (CNY)	5.14	5.48	8.03	8.38	9.14	9.53
Adjusted Earnings Per Share (Diluted) (CNY)	5.93	6.33	9.21	9.96	10.33	11.18
Dividends Per Share (CNY)	0.70	0.75	1.11	1.16	1.26	1.31

## Key Valuation Drivers as of 26 Nov 2025

Cost of Equity %	9.0
Pre-Tax Cost of Debt %	5.3
Weighted Average Cost of Capital %	9.5
Long-Run Tax Rate %	22.1
Stage II EBI Growth Rate %	8.0
Stage II Investment Rate %	13.0
Perpetuity Year	20

Additional estimates and scenarios available for download at <https://pitchbook.com/>.

## Discounted Cash Flow Valuation as of 26 Nov 2025

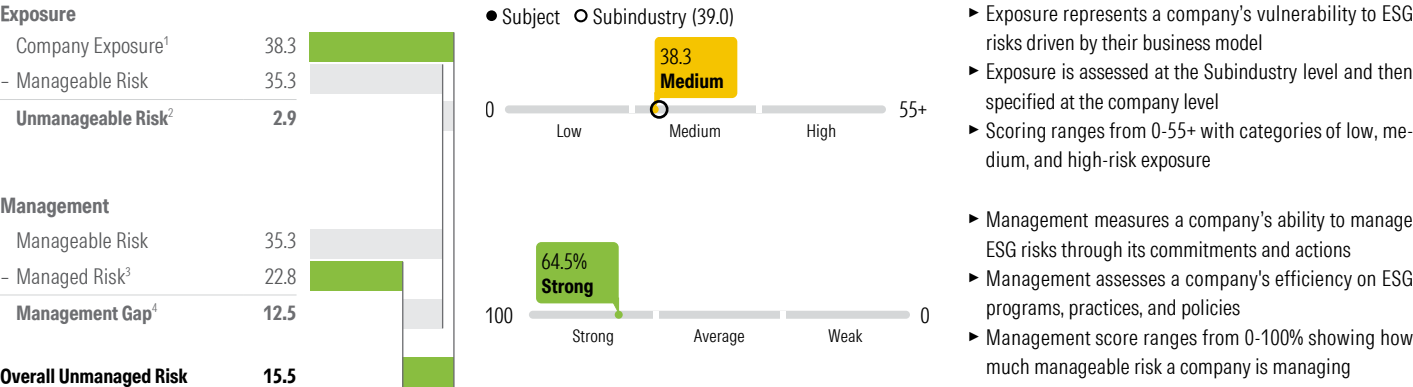
	CNY Mil
Present Value Stage I	1,180,506
Present Value Stage II	1,379,166
Present Value Stage III	1,681,690
<b>Total Firm Value</b>	<b>4,241,363</b>
Cash and Equivalents	428,093
Debt	194,869
Other Adjustments	739,149
<b>Equity Value</b>	<b>5,213,736</b>
Projected Diluted Shares	19
<b>Fair Value per Share (USD)</b>	<b>258.00</b>

Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA ★★★★★

31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

<b>Last Price</b> 147.36 USD 30 Dec 2025	<b>Fair Value Estimate</b> 258.00 USD 18 Nov 2025 12:58, UTC	<b>Price/FVE</b> 0.57	<b>Market Cap</b> 349.41 USD Bil 31 Dec 2025	<b>Economic Moat™</b> Wide	<b>Equity Style Box</b> Large Blend	<b>Uncertainty</b> High	<b>Capital Allocation</b> Standard	<b>ESG Risk Rating Assessment¹</b> 3 Dec 2025 06:00, UTC
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ESG Risk Rating Breakdown



ESG Risk Rating



ESG Risk Ratings measure the degree to which a company's value is impacted by environmental, social, and governance risks, by evaluating the company's ability to manage the ESG risks it faces.

1. A company's Exposure to material ESG issues 2. Unmanageable Risk refers to risks that are inherent to a particular business model that cannot be managed by programs or initiatives 3. Managed Risk = Manageable Risk multiplied by a Management score of 64.5% 4. Management Gap assesses risks that are not managed, but are considered manageable 5. ESG Risk Rating Assessment = Overall Unmanaged Risk = Management Gap plus Unmanageable Risk

ESG Risk Rating Assessment⁵

ESG Risk Rating is of Dec 03, 2025. Highest Controversy Level is as of Dec 08, 2025. Sustainalytics Subindustry: Internet Software and Services. Sustainalytics provides Morningstar with company ESG ratings and metrics on a monthly basis and as such, the ratings in Morningstar may not necessarily reflect current Sustainalytics' scores for the company. For the most up to date rating and more information, please visit: [sustainalytics.com/esg-ratings/](https://www.sustainalytics.com/esg-ratings/).

Peer Analysis 03 Dec 2025		Peers are selected from the company's Sustainalytics-defined Subindustry and are displayed based on the closest market cap values					
Company Name		Exposure		Management		ESG Risk Rating	
Alibaba Group Holding Ltd		38.3   Medium	0 —●— 55+	64.5   Strong	100 —●— 0	15.5   Low	0 —●— 40+
Baidu Inc		40.8   Medium	0 —●— 55+	60.1   Strong	100 —●— 0	18.1   Low	0 —●— 40+
Tencent Holdings Ltd		38.5   Medium	0 —●— 55+	59.5   Strong	100 —●— 0	17.2   Low	0 —●— 40+
JD.com Inc		39.2   Medium	0 —●— 55+	37.4   Average	100 —●— 0	25.7   Medium	0 —●— 40+
Meituan		35.8   Medium	0 —●— 55+	41.8   Average	100 —●— 0	21.8   Medium	0 —●— 40+

# Appendix

## Historical Morningstar Rating

### Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR BABA 31 Dec 2025 22:33, UTC

Dec 2025 ★★★★★	Nov 2025 ★★★★	Oct 2025 ★★★★	Sep 2025 ★★★★	Aug 2025 ★★★	Jul 2025 ★★★★	Jun 2025 ★★★★	May 2025 ★★★★	Apr 2025 ★★★★	Mar 2025 ★★★★	Feb 2025 ★★★★	Jan 2025 ★★★
Dec 2024 ★★★	Nov 2024 ★★★	Oct 2024 ★★★	Sep 2024 ★★★	Aug 2024 ★★★★	Jul 2024 ★★★★	Jun 2024 ★★★★	May 2024 ★★★★	Apr 2024 ★★★★	Mar 2024 ★★★★	Feb 2024 ★★★★	Jan 2024 ★★★★★
Dec 2023 ★★★★★	Nov 2023 ★★★★	Oct 2023 ★★★★	Sep 2023 ★★★★	Aug 2023 ★★★★	Jul 2023 ★★★★	Jun 2023 ★★★★★	May 2023 ★★★★★	Apr 2023 ★★★★★	Mar 2023 ★★★★★	Feb 2023 ★★★★★	Jan 2023 ★★★★
Dec 2022 ★★★★★	Nov 2022 ★★★★★	Oct 2022 ★★★★★	Sep 2022 ★★★★★	Aug 2022 ★★★★★	Jul 2022 ★★★★★	Jun 2022 ★★★★	May 2022 ★★★★★	Apr 2022 ★★★★★	Mar 2022 ★★★★★	Feb 2022 ★★★★★	Jan 2022 ★★★★
Dec 2021 ★★★★	Nov 2021 ★★★★	Oct 2021 ★★★★★	Sep 2021 ★★★★★	Aug 2021 ★★★★★	Jul 2021 ★★★★	Jun 2021 ★★★★	May 2021 —	Apr 2021 ★★★★	Mar 2021 ★★★★	Feb 2021 ★★★★	Jan 2021 ★★★
Dec 2020 ★★★★	Nov 2020 ★★★	Oct 2020 ★★★	Sep 2020 ★★★	Aug 2020 ★★★	Jul 2020 ★★★	Jun 2020 ★★★	May 2020 ★★★★	Apr 2020 ★★★★	Mar 2020 ★★★★	Feb 2020 ★★★	Jan 2020 ★★★

### Baidu Inc 09888 31 Dec 2025 17:21, UTC

Dec 2025 ★★★	Nov 2025 ★★★★	Oct 2025 ★★★★	Sep 2025 ★★★	Aug 2025 ★★★★	Jul 2025 ★★★★	Jun 2025 ★★★★★	May 2025 ★★★★★	Apr 2025 ★★★★★	Mar 2025 ★★★★	Feb 2025 ★★★★★	Jan 2025 —
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Dec 2022 ★★★★	Nov 2022 ★★★★★	Oct 2022 ★★★★★	Sep 2022 ★★★★	Aug 2022 ★★★★	Jul 2022 ★★★★	Jun 2022 ★★★★	May 2022 ★★★★	Apr 2022 ★★★★	Mar 2022 ★★★★	Feb 2022 ★★★★	Jan 2022 ★★★★
Dec 2021 ★★★★	Nov 2021 ★★★★	Oct 2021 ★★★	Sep 2021 ★★★★	Aug 2021 ★★★★	Jul 2021 ★★★★	Jun 2021 ★★★	May 2021 ★★★	Apr 2021 —	Mar 2021 —	Feb 2021 —	Jan 2021 —
Dec 2020 —	Nov 2020 —	Oct 2020 —	Sep 2020 —	Aug 2020 —	Jul 2020 —	Jun 2020 —	May 2020 —	Apr 2020 —	Mar 2020 —	Feb 2020 —	Jan 2020 —

### Tencent Holdings Ltd 00700 31 Dec 2025 17:10, UTC

Dec 2025 ★★★★	Nov 2025 ★★★★	Oct 2025 ★★★★	Sep 2025 ★★★★	Aug 2025 ★★★★	Jul 2025 ★★★★	Jun 2025 ★★★★	May 2025 ★★★★	Apr 2025 ★★★★	Mar 2025 ★★★★	Feb 2025 ★★★★	Jan 2025 —
Dec 2024 ★★★★★	Nov 2024 ★★★★★	Oct 2024 ★★★★	Sep 2024 ★★★★	Aug 2024 ★★★★★	Jul 2024 ★★★★★	Jun 2024 ★★★★★	May 2024 ★★★★★	Apr 2024 ★★★★★	Mar 2024 ★★★★★	Feb 2024 ★★★★★	Jan 2024 ★★★★★
Dec 2023 ★★★★★	Nov 2023 ★★★★★	Oct 2023 ★★★★★	Sep 2023 ★★★★★	Aug 2023 ★★★★★	Jul 2023 ★★★★★	Jun 2023 ★★★★★	May 2023 ★★★★★	Apr 2023 ★★★★★	Mar 2023 ★★★★★	Feb 2023 ★★★★★	Jan 2023 ★★★★★
Dec 2022 ★★★★★	Nov 2022 ★★★★★	Oct 2022 ★★★★★	Sep 2022 ★★★★★	Aug 2022 ★★★★★	Jul 2022 ★★★★★	Jun 2022 ★★★★★	May 2022 ★★★★★	Apr 2022 ★★★★★	Mar 2022 ★★★★★	Feb 2022 ★★★★★	Jan 2022 ★★★★★
Dec 2021 ★★★★★	Nov 2021 ★★★★	Oct 2021 ★★★★	Sep 2021 ★★★★★	Aug 2021 ★★★★★	Jul 2021 ★★★★★	Jun 2021 ★★★★	May 2021 ★★★★	Apr 2021 ★★★	Mar 2021 ★★★	Feb 2021 ★★★	Jan 2021 ★★★
Dec 2020 ★★★★	Nov 2020 ★★★	Oct 2020 ★★★	Sep 2020 ★★★	Aug 2020 ★★★	Jul 2020 ★★★	Jun 2020 ★★★	May 2020 ★★★	Apr 2020 —	Mar 2020 ★★★★	Feb 2020 ★★★	Jan 2020 ★★★★

Meituan Class B 03690 31 Dec 2025 17:21, UTC

Dec 2025 ★★★★★	Nov 2025 ★★★★★	Oct 2025 ★★★★★	Sep 2025 ★★★★★	Aug 2025 ★★★★★	Jul 2025 ★★★★★	Jun 2025 ★★★★★	May 2025 ★★★	Apr 2025 ★★★★★	Mar 2025 ★★★	Feb 2025 ★★★	Jan 2025 —
Dec 2024 ★★★	Nov 2024 ★★	Oct 2024 ★★	Sep 2024 ★★	Aug 2024 ★★★	Jul 2024 ★★★	Jun 2024 ★★★	May 2024 ★★★	Apr 2024 ★★★	Mar 2024 ★★★	Feb 2024 ★★★★★	Jan 2024 ★★★★★
Dec 2023 ★★★★★	Nov 2023 ★★★	Oct 2023 ★★★★★	Sep 2023 ★★★★★	Aug 2023 ★★★	Jul 2023 ★★★	Jun 2023 ★★★	May 2023 ★★★★★	Apr 2023 ★★★	Mar 2023 ★★★	Feb 2023 ★★★	Jan 2023 ★★★
Dec 2022 ★★★	Nov 2022 ★★★	Oct 2022 ★★★★★	Sep 2022 ★★★	Aug 2022 ★★★	Jul 2022 ★★★	Jun 2022 ★★★	May 2022 ★★★	Apr 2022 ★★★	Mar 2022 ★★★	Feb 2022 ★★★	Jan 2022 ★★★
Dec 2021 ★★★	Nov 2021 —	Oct 2021 —	Sep 2021 —	Aug 2021 —	Jul 2021 —	Jun 2021 —	May 2021 —	Apr 2021 —	Mar 2021 —	Feb 2021 —	Jan 2021 —
Dec 2020 —	Nov 2020 —	Oct 2020 —	Sep 2020 —	Aug 2020 —	Jul 2020 —	Jun 2020 —	May 2020 —	Apr 2020 —	Mar 2020 —	Feb 2020 —	Jan 2020 —

# Research Methodology for Valuing Companies

## Overview

At the heart of our valuation system is a detailed projection of a company's future cash flows, resulting from our analysts' research. Analysts create custom industry and company assumptions to feed income statement, balance sheet, and capital investment assumptions into our globally standardized, proprietary discounted cash flow, or DCF, modeling templates. We use scenario analysis, in-depth competitive advantage analysis, and a variety of other analytical tools to augment this process. Moreover, we think analyzing valuation through discounted cash flows presents a better lens for viewing cyclical companies, high-growth firms, businesses with finite lives (e.g., mines), or companies expected to generate negative earnings over the next few years. That said, we don't dismiss multiples altogether but rather use them as supporting cross-checks for our DCF-based fair value estimates. We also acknowledge that DCF models offer their own challenges (including a potential proliferation of estimated inputs and the possibility that the method may miss short-term market-price movements), but we believe these negatives are mitigated by deep analysis and our long-term approach.

Morningstar's equity research group ("we," "our") believes that a company's intrinsic worth results from the future cash flows it can generate. The Morningstar Rating for stocks identifies stocks trading at a discount or premium to their intrinsic worth—or fair value estimate, in Morningstar terminology. Five-star stocks sell for the biggest risk adjusted discount to their fair values, whereas 1-star stocks trade at premiums to their intrinsic worth.

Four key components drive the Morningstar rating: (1) our assessment of the firm's economic moat, (2) our estimate of the stock's fair value, (3) our uncertainty around that fair value estimate and (4) the current market price. This process ultimately culminates in our single-point star rating.

## 1. Economic Moat

The concept of an economic moat plays a vital role not only in our qualitative assessment of a firm's long-term investment potential, but also in the actual calculation of our fair value estimates. An economic moat is a structural feature that allows a firm to sustain excess profits over a

long period of time. We define economic profits as returns on invested capital (or ROIC) over and above our estimate of a firm's cost of capital, or weighted average cost of capital (or WACC). Without a moat, profits are more susceptible to competition. We have identified five sources of economic moats: intangible assets, switching costs, network effect, cost advantage, and efficient scale.

Companies with a narrow moat are those we believe are more likely than not to achieve normalized excess returns for at least the next 10 years. Wide-moat companies are those in which we have very high confidence that excess returns will remain for 10 years, with excess returns more likely than not to remain for at least 20 years. The longer a firm generates economic profits, the higher its intrinsic value. We believe low-quality, no-moat companies will see their normalized returns gravitate toward the firm's cost of capital more quickly than companies with moats.

When considering a company's moat, we also assess whether there is a substantial threat of value destruction, stemming from risks related to ESG, industry disruption, financial health, or other idiosyncratic issues. In this context, a risk is considered potentially value destructive if its occurrence would eliminate a firm's economic profit on a cumulative or midcycle basis. If we deem the probability of occurrence sufficiently high, we would not characterize the company as possessing an economic moat.

## 2. Estimated Fair Value

Combining our analysts' financial forecasts with the firm's economic moat helps us assess how long returns on invested capital are likely to exceed the firm's cost of capital. Returns of firms with a wide economic moat rating are assumed to fade to the perpetuity period over a longer period of time than the returns of narrow-moat firms, and both will fade slower than no-moat firms, increasing our estimate of their intrinsic value.

Our model is divided into three distinct stages:

### Stage I: Explicit Forecast

In this stage, which can last five to 10 years, analysts make full financial statement forecasts, including items such as revenue, profit margins, tax rates, changes in working capital accounts, and capital spending. Based on these projections, we calculate earnings before interest,

after taxes (EBI) and the net new investment (NNI) to derive our annual free cash flow forecast.

### Stage II: Fade

The second stage of our model is the period it will take the company's return on new invested capital—the return on capital of the next dollar invested ("RONIC")—to decline (or rise) to its cost of capital. During the Stage II period, we use a formula to approximate cash flows in lieu of explicitly modeling the income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement as we do in Stage I. The length of the second stage depends on the strength of the company's economic moat. We forecast this period to last anywhere from one year (for companies with no economic moat) to 10–15 years or more (for wide-moat companies). During this period, cash flows are forecast using four assumptions: an average growth rate for EBI over the period, a normalized investment rate, average return on new invested capital (RONIC), and the number of years until perpetuity, when excess returns cease. The investment rate and return on new invested capital decline until a perpetuity value is calculated. In the case of firms that do not earn their cost of capital, we assume marginal ROICs rise to the firm's cost of capital (usually attributable to less reinvestment), and we may truncate the second stage.

### Stage III: Perpetuity

Once a company's marginal ROIC hits its cost of capital, we calculate a continuing value, using a standard perpetuity formula. At perpetuity, we assume that any growth or decline or investment in the business neither creates nor destroys value and that any new investment provides a return in line with estimated WACC.

Because a dollar earned today is worth more than a dollar earned tomorrow, we discount our projections of cash flows in stages I, II, and III to arrive at a total present value of expected future cash flows. Because we are modeling free cash flow to the firm—representing cash available to provide a return to all capital providers—we discount future cash flows using the WACC, which is a weighted average of the costs of equity, debt, and preferred stock (and any other funding sources), using expected future proportionate long-term, market-value weights.

## 3. Uncertainty Around That Fair Value Estimate

Morningstar's Uncertainty Rating is designed to capture the range of potential outcomes for a company's intrinsic value. This rating is used to assign the margin of safety required before investing, which in turn explicitly drives our stock star rating system. The Uncertainty Rating is aimed at identifying the confidence we should have in assigning a fair value estimate for a given stock.

Our Uncertainty Rating is meant to take into account anything that can increase the potential dispersion of future

## Morningstar Equity Research Star Rating Methodology



# Research Methodology for Valuing Companies

outcomes for the intrinsic value of a company, and anything that can affect our ability to accurately predict these outcomes. The rating begins with a suggested rating produced by a quantitative process based on the trailing 12-month standard deviation of daily stock returns. An analyst overlay is then applied, with analysts using the suggested rating, historical rating data, and their own knowledge of the company to inform them as they make the final Uncertainty Rating decision. Ultimately, the rating decision rests with the analyst. Analysts take into account many characteristics when making their final decision, including cyclical factors, operational and financial factors such as leverage, company-specific events, ESG risks, and anything else that might increase the potential dispersion of future outcomes and our ability to estimate those outcomes.

Our recommended margin of safety—the discount to fair value demanded before we'd recommend buying or selling the stock—widens as our uncertainty of the estimated value of the equity increases. The more uncertain we are about the potential dispersion of outcomes, the greater the discount we require relative to our estimate of the value of the firm before we would recommend the purchase of the shares. In addition, the Uncertainty Rating provides guidance in portfolio construction based on risk tolerance.

Our Uncertainty Ratings are: Low, Medium, High, Very High, and Extreme.

Qualitative Analysis Uncertainty Ratings	Margin of Safety	
	★★★★★ Rating	★ Rating
Low	20% Discount	25% Premium
Medium	30% Discount	35% Premium
High	40% Discount	55% Premium
Very High	50% Discount	75% Premium
Extreme	75% Discount	300% Premium

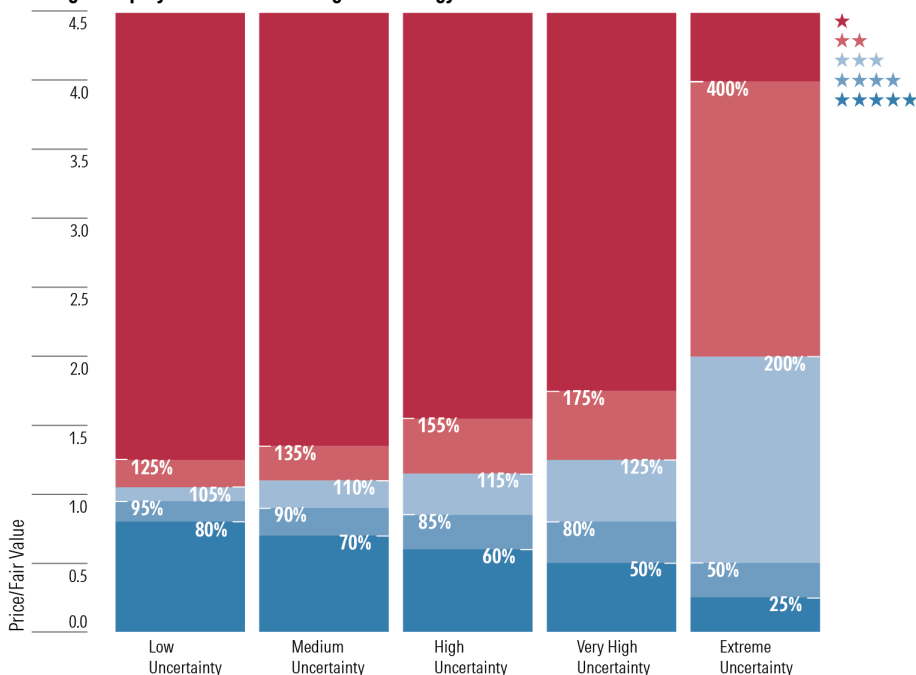
Our uncertainty rating is based on the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of potential outcomes, covering the 25th percentile–75th percentile. This means that when a stock hits 5 stars, we expect there is a 75% chance that the intrinsic value of that stock lies above the current market price. Similarly, when a stock hits 1 star, we expect there is a 75% chance that the intrinsic value of that stock lies below the current market price.

## 4. Market Price

The market prices used in this analysis and noted in the report come from exchange on which the stock is listed which we believe is a reliable source.

For more details about our methodology, please go to <https://shareholders.morningstar.com>

## Morningstar Equity Research Star Rating Methodology



## Morningstar Star Rating for Stocks

Once we determine the fair value estimate of a stock, we compare it with the stock's current market price on a daily basis, and the star rating is automatically re-calculated at the market close on every day the market on which the stock is listed is open. Our analysts keep close tabs on the companies they follow, and, based on thorough and ongoing analysis, raise or lower their fair value estimates as warranted.

Please note, there is no predefined distribution of stars. That is, the percentage of stocks that earn 5 stars can fluctuate daily, so the star ratings, in the aggregate, can serve as a gauge of the broader market's valuation. When there are many 5-star stocks, the stock market as a whole is more undervalued, in our opinion, than when very few companies garner our highest rating.

We expect that if our base-case assumptions are true the market price will converge on our fair value estimate over time generally within three years (although it is impossible to predict the exact time frame in which market prices may adjust).

Our star ratings are guideposts to a broad audience and individuals must consider their own specific investment goals, risk tolerance, tax situation, time horizon, income needs, and complete investment portfolio, among other factors.

The Morningstar Star Ratings for stocks are defined below:

★★★★★ We believe appreciation beyond a fair risk-adjusted return is highly likely over a multiyear time frame. Scenario analysis developed by our analysts indicates that the current market price represents an excessively pessimistic outlook, limiting downside risk and maximizing upside potential.

★★★★ We believe appreciation beyond a fair risk-adjusted return is likely.

★★★ Indicates our belief that investors are likely to receive a fair risk-adjusted return (approximately cost of equity).

★★ We believe investors are likely to receive a less than fair risk-adjusted return.

★ Indicates a high probability of undesirable risk-adjusted returns from the current market price over a multi-year time frame, based on our analysis. Scenario analysis by our analysts indicates that the market is pricing in an excessively optimistic outlook, limiting upside potential and leaving the investor exposed to Capital loss.

## Other Definitions

**Last Price:** Price of the stock as of the close of the market of the last trading day before date of the report.

**Capital Allocation Rating:** Our Capital Allocation (or Stewardship) Rating represents our assessment of the quality of management's capital allocation, with particular emphasis on the firm's balance sheet, investments,



# Research Methodology for Valuing Companies

and shareholder distributions. Analysts consider companies' investment strategy and valuation, balance sheet management, and dividend and share buyback policies. Corporate governance factors are only considered if they are likely to materially impact shareholder value, though either the balance sheet, investment, or shareholder distributions. Analysts assign one of three ratings: "Exemplary", "Standard", or "Poor". Analysts judge Capital Allocation from an equity holder's perspective. Ratings are determined on a forward looking and absolute basis. The Standard rating is most common as most managers will exhibit neither exceptionally strong nor poor capital allocation.

Capital Allocation (or Stewardship) analysis published prior to Dec. 9, 2020, was determined using a different process. Beyond investment strategy, financial leverage, and dividend and share buyback policies, analysts also considered execution, compensation, related party transactions, and accounting practices in the rating.

**Capital Allocation Rating:** Our Capital Allocation (or Stewardship) Rating represents our assessment of the quality of management's capital allocation, with particular emphasis on the firm's balance sheet, investments, and shareholder distributions. Analysts consider companies' investment strategy and valuation, balance sheet management, and dividend and share buyback policies. Corporate governance factors are only considered if they are likely to materially impact shareholder value, though either the balance sheet, investment, or shareholder distributions. Analysts assign one of three ratings: "Exemplary", "Standard", or "Poor". Analysts judge Capital Allocation from an equity holder's perspective. Ratings are determined on a forward looking and absolute basis. The Standard rating is most common as most managers will exhibit neither exceptionally strong nor poor capital allocation.

Capital Allocation (or Stewardship) analysis published prior to Dec. 9, 2020, was determined using a different process. Beyond investment strategy, financial leverage, and dividend and share buyback policies, analysts also considered execution, compensation, related party transactions, and accounting practices in the rating.

**Sustainalytics ESG Risk Rating Assessment:** The ESG Risk Rating Assessment is provided by Sustainalytics; a Morningstar company.

Sustainalytics' ESG Risk Ratings measure the degree to which company's economic value at risk is driven by environment, social and governance (ESG) factors.

Sustainalytics analyzes over 1,300 data points to assess a company's exposure to and management of ESG risks. In other words, ESG Risk Ratings measures a company's unmanaged ESG Risks represented as a quantitative score.

Unmanaged Risk is measured on an open-ended scale starting at zero (no risk) with lower scores representing less unmanaged risk and, for 95% of cases, the unmanaged ESG Risk score is below 50.

Based on their quantitative scores, companies are grouped into one of five Risk Categories (negligible, low, medium, high, severe). These risk categories are absolute, meaning that a 'high risk' assessment reflects a comparable degree of unmanaged ESG risk across all subindustries covered.

The ESG Risk Rating Assessment is a visual representation of Sustainalytics ESG Risk Categories on a 1 to 5 scale. Companies with Negligible Risk = 5 Globes, Low Risk = 4, Medium Risk = 3 Globes, High Risk = 2 Globes, Severe Risk = 1 Globe. For more information, please visit [sustainalytics.com/esg-ratings/](https://sustainalytics.com/esg-ratings/)

Ratings should not be used as the sole basis in evaluating a company or security. Ratings involve unknown risks and uncertainties which may cause our expectations not to occur or to differ significantly from what was expected and should not be considered an offer or solicitation to buy or sell a security.

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