

Elementary Chinese I

Elementary Chinese I

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Lastly, I would like to thank two OER resources I remixed when creating this book. The first is "[Gateway to Chinese](#)", which most of the dialogues in this textbook were adopted from. To make the resource better meet my students' learning needs, I made them more authentic, created vocabulary lists, and added grammar explanations and culture facts that go with the dialogues. The other resource I adapted for my introduction chapter is Lin Hong's "[Beginning Chinese](#)."

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Introduction

This Open Educational Resource textbook on Elementary Chinese I is designed for those who are learning beginning Chinese in their first semester. By using this book, students will learn the Chinese phonological system, useful vocabulary words and expressions, important grammar knowledge, as well as relevant Chinese culture and customs. Simplified Chinese is used throughout the book.

This book has eight chapters, based on eight different topics. The first chapter is a brief introduction about the Chinese language, including its pronunciation system and written system. The other chapters cover seven different topics, including greeting and self-introduction, hobbies and nationalities, family members and occupations, talking about eating and drinking, inviting friends to dinner, making phone calls, and talking about classes and exams. Each topic contains two target dialogues, each starting with a dialogue and a list of new vocabulary, then followed by target grammar and culture notes.

This book aims at developing students' elementary communicative skills and knowledge of the Chinese language and culture. It will be updated and modified based on users' feedback.

PART I

INTRODUCTION: THE

BASICS OF CHINESE

Learning Objectives:

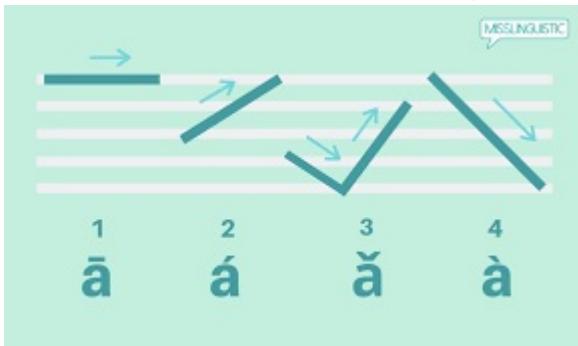
After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

- know the four tones, neutral tones, and tone markers.
- pronounce consonants/initials and vowels/finals.
- understand the writing system, including basic strokes, character composition, and stroke order.
- learn some basic expressions that are often used in class.

I. Tones

Chinese is a tonal language. Tones are used to differentiate the meanings between words that have the same syllable.

There are four tones in Mandarin Chinese, as shown below:



Watch the following video to learn how the four tones are pronounced:



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In addition, there is a neutral tone, which is pronounced quickly and lightly. Syllables with a neutral tone have no tone mark. Watch the video below to learn how to pronounce it:



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<https://openbooks.lib.msu.edu/chs101/?p=121#oembed-2>

2. Simple Finals and Initials

There are six basic simple vowels or finals in Chinese: a, o, e, i, u, ü.

Simple Finals	Compare to English
a	similar to “ah” in the English “Ah-hah!”
o	as the “o” in “often”
e	similar to “er” in the English “her,” without the tongue curling up.
i	similar to “ee” in the English “see”
u	similar to “oo” in the English “food”
ü	This is a special one, because there is not an alternative in English. It’s similar to the sound “u,” but with the lips pouting up a little.

Please watch the video below and learn how to pronounce them:



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There are 21 initials/consonants in Chinese: b, p, m, f, d, t, n, l, g, k, h, j, q, x, z, c, s, zh, ch, sh, and r. In addition, there are two half-vowels: y and w. Watch the video below to learn how to pronounce them:



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*from this version of the text. You can view them online
here: <https://openbooks.lib.msu.edu/chs101/?p=124#oembed-2>*

3. Compound Finals and Nasal Finals

There are nine compound finals in Chinese: ai, ei, ao, ou, iu, ui, ie, üe, and er. As you can see, -ao is a compound final made up of the two simple vowels a + o. When pronouncing such a compound, all you need to do is to glide your tongue from one simple vowel to the other (see the table below).

Compound Finals	Compare to English
ai	as the i in “bike”
ei	similar to “ey” in the English “hey”
ao	similar to “ou” in the English “loud”
ou	similar to “oa” in the English “boat”
iu	combine Chinese finals “i” and “ou”
ui	similar to the sound in “wait”. It is spelled as “wei” when it stands as an independent syllable
ie	similar to the ye in “yes”
üe	as a slide from pinyin “ü” to the vowel “e”
er	Roll up your tongue and keep it in the middle position of your mouth. Similar to the “ear” in the English “early”.

Watch the video below and learn how to pronounce them:



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In addition, there are nine nasal finals in Chinese: an, en, in, un, ün, ang, eng, ing, ong. See the comparison to English:

Nasal Finals	Compare to English
an	similar to “an” in the English “fan”
en	similar to “en” in the English “end”
in	similar to “in” in the English “pin”
un	similar to “when”
ün	combine “ü” and “n”
ang	similar to “ung” in the English “lung”
eng	similar to “eng” in the English “length”
ing	similar to “ing” in the English “king”
ong	similar to “ong” in the English “song”

Watch the video below and learn to pronounce them:



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4. Chinese Characters

Brief Introduction:

Chinese characters, also called Hanzi, are the oldest continuously used writing system in the world. Unlike the Roman alphabets, Chinese characters are used to illustrate meaning rather than sound. That's why learning to read Chinese requires a lot of memorization.

There are over 100,000 different Chinese characters. It is actually impossible to count them all precisely. However, the good news is, for language learners, knowing just 2,000 to 3,000 characters will give you the tools to read most newspapers and magazines.

Character Composition:

The composition of Chinese characters follows a certain system. Most of the characters consist of two components, one phonetic component and one symbolic component (as can be found in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, and 12th rows of the table below). The phonetic component indicates how a character is pronounced, and the symbolic component signifies the meaning of the character. For example, the character 姐 on the 2nd row consists of two components: on the left is the symbolic component “女”, meaning “female, woman”; on the right is the phonetic component “且”, with the pronunciation “qie”. The meaning of the character is “big sister”.

Some characters consist of three components, as listed in the 4th and 5th rows of the table below.

Some characters are single component ones, such as 口, 大, 水, as listed in the first row of the table below.

Structures	Names	Example Characters
	Whole	口、大、水、山、月
	Left-right	你、好、们、姐、时
	Top-bottom	爸、美、家、思
	Left-center-right	哪、搬、掰
	Top-middle-bottom	喜、萝
	Up-right surrounded	可、句、司
	Left-up surrounded	厅、厕、病
	Left-down surrounded	这、进、建
	Left-up-right surrounded	同、问、间
	Left-right -down surrounded	凶、幽
	Top-left-bottom surrounded	巨、区
	Overall surrounded	回、国、围

Radicals:

Radicals are the essential components of Chinese characters. For example, in the Chinese character 你 (meaning “you”), the left part 亻 is a radical that evolved from the earliest visual representation of a person. Radicals are often used to illustrate meanings. In the example of the character 你, the radical 亻 indicates “person”.

Eighty-four percent of the Chinese characters contain radicals, which will help you decode and comprehend the Chinese easily.

[Here is a table that lists commonly used radicals](#)

Basic Strokes:

When learning to write Chinese characters, a good first step in making the task less intimidating is identifying strokes. A basic stroke is a single calligraphic mark moving in one direction across a writing surface. Here are some basic strokes.

Strokes	Pinyin Names	English	Example Characters
丶	diǎn	dot	冰
一	héng	horizontal	王
丨	shù	vertical	干
ノ	pié	Downward left	八
乚	nà	Downward right	人
フ	tú	Upward	冰
フフ	shù gōu	Vertical hook	水
フフ	wān gōu	Slanted hook	代
フフ	héng gōu	Horizontal hook	头
フフ	héng zhē	Horizontal bend	口
フ	shù zhē	Vertical bend	凶

Stroke Order:

Following the stroke order rules will make it easier for you to write Chinese characters. Your handwriting will also look better if you write characters in the correct stroke order.

There are seven basic stroke order rules to follow. Please check them out at [7 Basic Rules To Chinese Stroke Order](#)

Basic Expressions Used in Class:

上课！shàng kè ! (Class begins)

下课！xià kè ! (Class is over)

老师好！lǎo shī hǎo ! (Hello, teacher)

同学们好！tóng xué mén hǎo ! (Hello, classmates)

大家好！dà jiā hǎo ! (Hello, everybody)

你们好！nǐ mén hǎo ! (Hello)

早！zǎo ! (Morning)

老师早！lǎo shī zǎo ! (Morning, teacher)

请听我说。qǐng tīng wǒ shuō 。(Please listen to me)

请跟我说。qǐng gēn wǒ shuō 。(Please read after me)

你说。nǐ shuō 。(Please speak)

请再说一遍。qǐng zài shuō yī biàn 。(Please say it again)

再见！zài jiàn ! (Goodbye)

老师再见！lǎo shī zài jiàn ! (Bye, teacher)

懂了吗？dǒng le má ? (Understand?)

懂了。dǒng le 。(I understood.)

没懂。méi dǒng 。(I didn't understand.)

对不对？duì bú duì ? (Is it correct?)

对。duì 。(Correct)

不对。bú duì 。(Incorrect)

我不知道。wǒ bù zhī dào 。(I don't know.)

有问题吗？yǒu wèn tí má ? (Any questions?)

没有。méi yǒu 。(I don't have any [questions]).

我有一个问题。wǒ yǒu yī gè wèn tí 。(I have a question.)

谢谢！xiè xie ! (Thanks!)

对不起！duì bù qǐ ! (Sorry.)

没关系！méi guān xì ! (That's all right.)

PART II

LESSON 1: FIRST CONTACT

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to use Chinese to:

- greet strangers and friends in Chinese and respond to their greetings.
- inquire about strangers' names and reply to questions about names.
- ask about professions and answer questions.
- ask about nationalities and origins.

5. Lesson 1 Dialogue 1: Meeting People for the First Time

Dialogue:

(Li Xiaopeng is a freshman at a Chinese university. Today is her first day at school. She meets Wang Gui on campus.)

Simplified Chinese

Li Xiaopeng: 您好！我姓李，请问您贵姓？

Wang Gui: 你好！我姓王。

Li Xiaopeng: 王先生，您叫什么？

Wang Gui: 我叫王贵。李小姐，你呢？

Li Xiaopeng: 我叫李小朋。很高兴认识您！

Wang Gui: 很高兴认识你！

See Traditional Chinese

Simplified Chinese

Li Xiaopeng: 您好！我姓李，请问您贵姓？

Wang Gui: 你好！我姓王。

Li Xiaopeng: 王先生，您叫什么？

Wang Gui: 我叫王贵。李小姐，你呢？

Li Xiaopeng : 我叫李小朋。很高兴认识您！

Wang Gui: 很高兴认识你！

Traditional Chinese

Li Xiaopeng: 您好！我姓李，請問您貴姓？

Wang Gui: 你好！我姓王。

Li Xiaopeng: 王先生，您叫什麼？

Wang Gui: 我叫王貴。李小姐，你呢？

Li Xiaopeng : 我叫李小朋。很高興認識您！

Wang Gui: 很高興認識你！



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
你	nǐ	pron., you
好	hǎo	adj., good, nice, kind
你好	nǐ hǎo	hello
您	nín	pron., a respectful way to say “you”
请/請	qǐng	v., to please
问/問	wèn	v., to ask
请问/請問	qǐng wèn	a polite way to start a question, meaning “May I ask...”
贵/貴	guì	adj., honorable, expensive
姓	xìng	v./n., to be surnamed; surname
贵姓	guì xìng	a polite way to ask for people's surname
我	wǒ	pron., I/me
王	Wáng	Chinese surname
先生	xiān sheng	n., Mr.; gentleman; husband
王先生	Wáng xiān sheng	Mr. Wang
李	Lǐ	Chinese surname
小姐	xiǎo jiě	n., Miss, Madam
李小姐	Lǐ xiǎo jiě	Miss Li
叫	jiào	verb, to call or to be called
什么/什麼	shén me	question word, what
叫什么/叫什麼	jiào shén me	to be called what
小	xiǎo	adj., little, small
朋	péng	noun, friend as in 朋友
呢	ne	question particle, used after a noun or a pronoun to form a question

Chinese	Pinyin	English
很	hěn	adv., very, very much
高兴/高興	gāo xìng	adj., happy, glad, pleased
认识/認識	rèn shi	verb, to know
很高兴认识你/很高興認識你	hěn gāo xìng rèn shí nǐ	It's a pleasure to meet you.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://openbooks.lib.msu.edu/chs101/?p=5#audio-5-2>



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://openbooks.lib.msu.edu/chs101/?p=5#h5p-1>

Grammar Notes:

1. Greeting with 你好 (nǐ hǎo, hello, literally “you good/well”):
This expression is often used to greet people whom you meet for the first time. 您好 “níng hǎo” is the respectful form of “nǐ hǎo”—it’s used to express special respect for the addressee. It is typically used when meeting people more senior in age or status or when greeting customers. In such situations the reply is often simply 你好 or 您好.
2. The verb 姓 (xìng, to be called):
This verb is **used with the surname only, never with the first**

name or the first plus surname together. For example, 我姓李 literally “I am called Li by last name”, meaning “My last name is Li”.

3. How to use 贵姓 (guì xìng):

贵姓 literally is “honorable surname”. 你/您贵姓 is a formal way to ask for somebody's surname. Note: when answering such a question, just reply with “我姓 + surname”. For example, “您贵姓？”“我姓王。” Note: Do not repeat “贵姓” in your reply.

4. Requesting politely with 请问 (qǐng wèn):

In Chinese, the character 请 (similar to “please” in English) is used before verbs to indicate “politeness”. The structure is “请 + verb”. For example, 请听。 (Please listen.) 请跟我说。 (Please read after me.)

In this dialogue, the phrase 请问 (qǐngwèn) is a set expression meaning not “please ask”, but “may I ask”. It often occurs before a question to make polite requests for information. For instance, 请问您贵姓？ (May I ask what your surname is?) In this sentence, 您贵姓 is the question that asks for surname, and 请问 is put before it to indicate that the speaker is being polite.

5. Chinese pronouns:

The basic personal pronouns are:

我(wǒ): I, me

你 (nǐ): you

他, 她, 它 (tā): he/him, she/her, it

们 is added to the singular to form the equivalent plural pronoun:

我们 (wǒ men): we/us

你们 (nǐ men): you (plural)

他们, 她们, 它们 (tā men): they/them

6. The verb 叫 (jiào, to be called, to call):

This verb can be followed by a given name or a full name. The structure is “**subject + 叫 + bi-syllable given name or full name**“. For example, 我叫王小名, literally “I am called Wang Xiaoming”.

The verb can also be used to mean “to call”. For example, 我叫

他李贵。(I call him Li Gui.)

7. Questions with 什么 (shén me, what):

The question word 什么 can be used either as a modifier as in 什么名字 (shénme míngzì, what name) or as a pronoun as in 你叫什么, literally “you are called what?”, meaning “what is your name?”.

8. Questions with 呢 (ne):

呢 is a question particle used to ask if a previous statement applies to the current situation too. For example: When somebody states 我姓王 (wǒ xìng wáng, My last name is Wang), he/she may then continue with 你呢 (nǐ ne), meaning “what about you?”.

9. The sentence 很高兴认识你 (hěn gāo xìng rèn shí nǐ):

It means “(I’m) glad to know you”. To respond to the statement, you can repeat 很高兴认识你 or 认识你很高兴 [literally: to know you (I’m) happy].

10. Word order of the Chinese question:

Unlike the word order of the English question, the word order of the Chinese question is to keep the word order of the statement and then change the “asked part” to the corresponding question word (see the example below).

Subject	verb	object
我	叫	Joyce.
wǒ	jiào	Joyce.
I	am called	Joyce.

change to the second person	unchanged	change to the question word
↓	↓	↓

你	叫	什么名字?
nǐ	jiào	shén me míng zì?
You	are called	what name?

Culture Notes:

1. 您貴姓 is normally **used in formal or business situations to show courtesy and respect**. When responding to it, Chinese people normally respond with 免貴，姓... (miǎn guì xìng...), meaning “no need for the ‘honorable’, my last name is...”
2. Chinese surnames:
王 and 李 are commonly used Chinese surnames. In this dialogue, 李小朋 is a typical Chinese name, with 李 being the surname preceding 小朋 the given name. Many Chinese surnames contain a single syllable/character. First names often have two syllables. There is a small number of very common surnames, including: 王 (wáng), 李 (lǐ), 张 (zhāng), 刘 (liú), 陈 (chén), 杨 (yáng), 黄 (huáng), 赵 (zhào), 吴 (wú), 周 (zhōu). [Learn about most frequently used Chinese surnames here.](#)
3. surname + 先生/小姐:
When addressing someone in Chinese, it is polite to use personal titles like Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc. **after the surname**. So instead of saying Mr. Wang and Miss Li, Chinese people say 王先生 [wáng xiān sheng] and 李小姐 [lǐ xiǎo jiě]. To show respect, friends might use the terms “老 lǎo” (old) and “小 xiǎo” (young) before surnames to replace titles. For example, I might call a colleague who is older than me 老李. I might also call a friend who is younger than me 小王.
4. When you meet people of your parents' age, it is polite to address them by using 叔叔 (shū shu, lit. uncle) and 阿姨 (ā yí, lit. aunt). If you know their surname, add it to the front. The pattern is: **Surname + 叔叔/阿姨**.
5. Greeting people in China:
你好 is the phrase often used when people meet for the FIRST time. When the Chinese greet people they already know, they use many different expressions or sentences under different circumstances. For instance, when meeting in the morning,

they would say “早上好”(zǎo shàng hǎo) or simply say “早”(zǎo), which means good morning. “下午好”(xià wǔ hǎo, good afternoon) and “晚上好”(wǎn shàng hǎo, good evening) are not used as common as the morning one. When meeting around the mealtime, people would simply say “吃了吗?”(chī le ma, “Have you eaten yet?”) to show their care. The younger generation tend to use “嗨”(hāi) or 哈喽(hā lóu) almost anytime or any occasion they meet, which has the same sound and meaning as the English word “Hi” or “Hello”.

When Chinese people greet each other, they normally smile and nod their heads politely or bow slightly. The bow is from the shoulders and should be greater if the person you are greeting has a higher status. Influenced by the West, the Chinese also shake hands in formal situations, but the handshake tends to be lighter and longer than the Western handshake. Traditionally, Chinese people do not greet with hugs or kisses. Many young people nowadays, however, are fine hugging new or old friends. Note: In China, always greet those who are older than you first. When you are introduced to a Chinese person, if you are seated, stand up from your seat to show your respect.

6. Lesson 1 Dialogue 2: Where are you from?

Dialogue:

(Teacher Wang meets Jenny and 王贵 in the dining hall. She starts the conversation.)

王老师：你们好！你们是老师吗？

王贵：我不是老师，是学生。她也是学生。您呢？

王老师：我是老师。我姓王。

王贵：王老师好！您是中文老师吗？

王老师：是。你是哪儿人？

王贵：我是北京人。

王老师：她也是北京人吗？

王贵：不是。她不是中国人。

王老师：那她是哪国人？

王贵：她是美国人。

王老师：她说中文吗？

王贵：不说，她说英文。

王老师：她想学中文吗？

王贵：想。

王老师：好，我教她。

See Traditional Chinese

Simplified Chinese

王老师：你们好！你们是老师吗？

王贵：我不是老师，是学生。她也是学生。您呢？

王老师：我是老师。我姓王。

王贵：王老师好！您是中文老师吗？

王老师：是。你是哪儿人？

王贵：我是北京人。王老师：她也是北京人吗？

王贵：不是。她不是中国人。

王老师：那她是哪国人？

王贵：她是美国人。

王老师：她说中文吗？

王贵：不说，她说英文。

Traditional Chinese

王老師：你們好！你們是老師嗎？

王貴：我不是老師，是學生。她也是學生。您呢？

王老師：我是老師。我姓王。

王貴：王老師好！您是中文老師嗎？

王老師：是。你是哪儿人？

王貴：我是北京人。王老師：她也是北京人嗎？

王貴：不是。她不是中國人。

王老師：那她是哪國人？

王貴：她是美國人。

王老師：她說中文嗎？

王貴：不說，她說英文。

王老师：她想学中文
吗？

王贵：想。

王老师：好，我教
她。

王老師：她想學中文
嗎？

王貴：想。

王老師：好，我教
她。



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
吗 / 嘴	ma	particle, used at the end of a sentence to form a general question
是	shì	verb, am/is/are
老师 / 老師	lǎo shī	n., teacher
不	bù	adv., no, not
学生 / 學生	xuéshēng	n., student
也	yě	adv., too, also
人	rén	n., person or people,
那	nà	adv., then/so...
哪	nǎ	question word, which
哪儿 / 哪兒	nǎ ér	question word, where
北京	běi jīng	place name, Beijing, capital city of China
国 / 國	guó	n., country
美国 / 美國	měi guó	n., USA
中国 / 中國	zhōng guó	n., China
说 / 說	shuō	v., to speak, to say
中文	zhōng wén	n., the Chinese language
英文	yīng wén	n. English
想	xiǎng	v., desire to, would like to
学 / 學	xué	v., to learn, to study
教	jiāo	v., to teach



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Grammar Notes:

1. Question particle 吗 (ma):

It is often added to the end of a sentence to form a simple yes/no question. Compare:

你是学生。 nǐ shì xuésheng. You are a student.

你是学生吗? Nǐ shì xuésheng ma? Are you a student?

2. The adverb 不 (bù , no, not):

As an adverb, it is normally put before a verb or an adjective to negate them. For example, 不姓李 or 不好。Note that 不 (bù) is pronounced bú in front of a syllable carrying a fourth tone. So 不是 is pronounced bú shì, and 不姓 is pronounced as bú xìng . This phenomenon is called Tone Sandhi. [This video summarizes how to pronounce 不 in different situations.](#)

3. The verb 是 (shì):

The verb is similar to “am/is/are” in English, linking two noun phrases, with the second one characterizing or identifying the first. For example:

我是学生。 Wǒ shì xuésheng. I am a student.

王先生是老师。 Wáng xiānsheng shì lǎoshī. Mr Wang is a teacher.

是 can also be used to give an affirmative answer to questions of the form “Is X Y?”. For example:

你是学生吗? Nǐ shì xuēsheng ma? Are you a student?
是。 Shì. Yes.

4. The adverb 也 (yě):

也 is used before verbs, meaning “too” or “also” (Note: in a negative sentence, 也 means “either” or “neither”). The sentence structure is “**Subject + 也 + Verb**“. For example, 我也姓李。(My last name is also Li.)

他也不是老师。(He is also not a teacher.)

Note: Unlike the English word “too” and “also,” the Chinese word “也” cannot be put before the subject or at the very end of a sentence.

5. Questions with 哪 (nǎ):

哪 is a question word, meaning “which”. 哪国人 literally “which country people” is used to ask about a person’s nationality. For example, 你是哪国人 ? (What is your nationality?)

6. The question word 哪儿 :

哪儿 means “where”. The sentence “你是哪儿人”, literally meaning “you are where person”, is often used to ask where a person is from. For example, 他是哪儿人 ? (Where is he from?)

7. The adverb 那 (nà) :

This adverb is often used before a sentence to begin a judgement or result from previous context, similar to the English “So, —”. 那你是哪国人 ? means “So, what’s your nationality?”

8. The verb 想 (xiǎng):

This verb is often followed by another verb, indicating “desire or would like to do something”. For example,
我想学中文。(I desire to learn Chinese.)
我想教你。(I would like to teach you.)

Culture Notes:

1. There are basically four ways to ask for origins:
 - (1) When asking for a foreigner's nationality, Chinese people normally say 你是哪个国家的 or 你是哪国人. The response is 我是__国人. For example, if you are American, you can reply with 我是美国人.
 - (2) When Chinese native speakers ask each other about specific place of birth or hometown, they usually use 你是哪儿人. For example, if my Chinese friend asks me 你是哪儿人, my response would be 我是北京人.
 - (3) Chinese people also use 你从哪里来 (nǐ cóng nǎ lǐ lái, lit. "you from where come", meaning "where are you from") to inquire about origins. Possible responses would be "我从 place 来". For example, if you want to say "I am from New York", the Chinese statement would be "我从纽约(niǔ yuē, New York)来" or simply "我是纽约人。"
 - (4) In formal situations, people ask 你来自哪里 (nǐ lái zì nǎ lǐ, lit. "you come from where", meaning "where do you come from"). The response is "我来自 place". For example, 我来自中国 means "I come from China."
2. The names of countries are often but not always formed by using a syllable that resembles the country's name in its own language followed by 国 (guó, meaning "country"). For example,

英国 yīng guó England

德国 dé guó Germany

法国 fǎ guó France

美国 měi guó United States of America

泰国 tài guó Thailand

Other country names resemble the sound of the country's name in its own language without adding 国:

意大利 yì dà lì Italy

澳大利亚 ào dà lì yà Australia

加拿大 jiā ná dà Canada

墨西哥 mò xī gē Mexico

Some common place names you should know are:

北京 běi jīng Beijing

上海 shàng hǎi Shanghai

香港 xiāng gǎng Hong Kong

伦敦 lún dūn London

华盛顿 huá shèng dùn Washington

纽约 niǔ yuē New York

巴黎 bā lí Paris

柏林 bó lín Berlin

旧金山 jiù jīn shān San Francisco

3. The terms for languages are usually formed by replacing the character 国 in the country name with the character 文 when referring to the written language, and with the character 语 (yǔ) when referring to the spoken language. For example, 中文 is formed by replacing “国” in the word “中国” with “文”. It is the same with 英文 (yīng wén, English) · 法文 (fǎ wén, French) · 德文 (dé wén, German) · 日文 (rì wén, Japanese) · 韩文 (hán wén, Korean) .

PART III

LESSON 2: FAMILY MEMBERS AND OCCUPATIONS

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

- ask questions about a photo.
- call family members appropriately in Chinese.
- describe a family photo.
- ask questions about someone's family, including members and their profession.

7. Lesson 2 Dialogue 1: Talking About a Photo

[Lesson 2 Dialogue 1 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help you practice this dialogue.

Narration:

这是我的一张照片。看，这个女孩子是我。你问我那个女孩是谁，是吗？我介绍一下：她是我的好朋友，叫文英。她是一个中国人，教美国学生学中文。她有一个哥哥和一个弟弟，哥哥是老师，弟弟是学生。你想认识他们吗？

slow speed reading:



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native-speaker:



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
这	zhè	pron., this
那	nà	pron., that
谁	shéi/shuí	question word, who, whom
看	kàn	v., to look
问	wèn	v., to ask
介绍	jiè shào	v., to introduce
一下	yí xià	adv., a little bit, briefly
女	nǚ	adj., female
男	nán	adj., male
朋友	péng yóu	n., friend
哥哥	gē ge	n., elder brother
弟弟	dì di	n., younger brother
和	hé	coordinating conjunction, and
的	de	possession particle
有	yǒu	v., have/has, there be
照片	zhàopian	n., photo
张	zhāng	measure word for objects with flat and thin surface like photo, paper, ticket, table
个	gè	measure word for most nouns
孩子	hái zi	n., child, kid
女孩子	nǚ hái zi	n., girl



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Supplementary Vocabulary Words:

爷爷 : yé ye, grandpa on father's side (n.)

奶奶 : nǎi nai, grandma on father's side (n.)

爸爸 : bà ba, father (n.)

妈妈 : mā ma, mother (n.)

姐姐 : jiě jie, elder sister (n.)

弟弟 : dì di, younger brother (n.)

妹妹 : mèi mei, younger sister (n.)

先生 : xiānsheng, husband (n.)

太太 : tàitai, wife (n.)

女儿 : nǚ ér, daughter (n.)

儿子 : ér zi, son (n.)

Grammar Notes:

1. The question pronoun 谁 (shéi/shuí, who, whom):

This question pronoun can be used as an object, as in the example 他是谁 ? (Who is he?) 那个女孩子是谁 ? (Who is that girl?)

It can also be used as a subject, as in the sentence 谁是老师 ? (Who is a/the teacher?) 谁是李贵 ? (Who is Li Gui?)

2. Pronouns 这 (zhè) and 那 (nà):

这 and 那 are used like “this” and “that” in English. For example, 这是什么? What is this?

那是什么? What is that?

那张名片是我的! That name card is mine!

Note: **When followed by nouns or noun phrases, measure words should be added after 这/那.** The structure is “**这/那+ measure word + Noun**”. For example, “this student” is translated to Chinese “这个学生”. “That boy” is “那个男孩”. “This photo” is “**这张照片**”.

3. Measure words:

Measure words are also called “classifiers” in Chinese. They are used to classify objects or people. Classifiers are also used in English. For example, you would say a “loaf” of bread or a “pair” of shoes. But different from English, Chinese has many more classifiers or measure words. They are very important in Chinese grammar as they are needed before every noun. For instance, in English you say, “three people”, but in Chinese, we need to say “三个人”. The general structure for measure words in general is: **“Number + measure word + Noun”**. Below are the two measure words in this lesson:

Measure word 个 (gè) : it can be used with most nouns in Chinese, either objects or people. For example, the English phrase “a student” is translated into 一个学生 in Chinese. More examples are 一个老师, 一个哥哥, 一个弟弟。

Measure word 张 : It can be used for things that have a flat surface such as photo, table, desk and bed. “A photo” is translated into “**一张照片**” in Chinese.

4. The verb 有 (yǒu):

This character has two meanings:

First, it means “to have/has”. For example, “I have an elder brother”. In Chinese we say “我有一个哥哥”.

Second, it means “there be”. For example, “There are four people in my family” is “我家有四个人”.

5. Possession marker 的(de) :

It is used in a similar way to “apostrophe-s” in English, but is used much more broadly. The structure is “**Noun 1 + 的 + Noun 2**”, meaning “Noun 1’s Noun 2”. For instance, 我的老师 means “my teacher”, but sometimes when close relationships or kinships are involved, it’s more natural to drop the 的. For example, “my girlfriend” can be translated into “我女朋友” or “我的女朋友”. It is the same with 我爸爸/我的爸爸，他妈妈/他的妈妈.

6. The adverb phrase 一下 (yí xià):

It is often used after a verb to express that the verb is carried out briefly or “a little bit”. Sometimes 一下 can be used to soften the tone. The structure is: “**Subj. + Verb + 一下 + Obj.**”. For example, 你看一下 means “take a look”. As 一下 is used, the action verb 看 is carried out very briefly. Below are two more examples:

你介绍一下。You introduce briefly.

我说一下。I speak briefly.

我打一下球。I play ball briefly.

Culture Notes:

Family is very important in Chinese culture. The character for family “家”, is comprised of a top part “宀”, indicating “cave” or “house”, and a bottom part “豕” (shǐ), meaning “pig”. To Chinese people, “家” (home) is the place where they can stay safe and have food inside. The Chinese notion of family is also tied to their country and philosophy. For instance, in Chinese, a country is called 国家 (guó

jiā), which literally translates as “state family”. Confucianism is 儒家 (rú jiā), which translates to “Confucian family”.

Within the traditional Chinese family structure, each family member has a specific form of address in Chinese, with different forms of address for an older and younger brother, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandfathers, and grandmothers on both the maternal and paternal sides of a family. For example, my mother's brothers are called 舅舅 (jiù jiu), while my father's older brother is called 伯伯 (bo bo) and the younger brother is called 叔叔 (shū shu).

Traditionally, Chinese culture values elders over younger ones, and males over females. When pairing up kinship terms, those that involve elders are put before the younger ones, such as 哥哥弟弟 (gē ge dì di, elder brother and younger brother), 姐姐妹妹 (jiě jie mèi mei, big sister and little sister); those that involve males are put before females such as 爸爸妈妈 (bà ba mā ma, father and mother), 爷爷奶奶 (yé ye nǎi nai, grandpa and grandma).

In addition, Chinese people address others as though they are family members. For example, you may hear Chinese people call a woman of similar age to their mothers 阿姨 (ā yí) “auntie” and an older man “uncle”. When seeing a slightly older boy or a girl, they use 哥哥 (gē ge) “brother” 姐姐 or (jiě jie) “sister”.

8. Lesson 2 Dialogue 2: Talking About Family Members

[Lesson 2 Dialogue 2 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help you practice this dialogue.

Narration:

大家好！我想介绍一下我的家人。这是一张我的家人的照片。我家有六个人：爸爸、妈妈、两个哥哥、一个姐姐和我。看，这个男人是我的爸爸，那个女人是我的妈妈。他们都是老师，爸爸是大学老师，妈妈是中学老师。我的两个哥哥都很高、很帅。这是我的大哥，他是一个医生。那是二哥，他是工程师。我的姐姐是大学生。这是我，我是小学生。我没有妹妹，也没有弟弟。我的家人都很爱我，我也爱他们。你家有几个人？他们都做什么工作？请你介绍一下。

slow-speed reading:





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native-speaker:



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
大家	dà jiā	pron., everybody, everyone
家人	jiā rén	n., family members
家	jiā	n., family, house, home
高	gāo	adj., tall, high
帅	shuài	adj., handsome
几	jǐ	question word, how many
两	liǎng	number, two
医生	yīsheng	n., doctor
工程师	gōng chéng shī	n., engineer
大	dà	adj., big, large
大哥	dà gē	n., the first eldest brother
二哥	èr gē	n., the second eldest brother
没	méi	adv., not, used to negate the verb 有
大学	dà xué	n., college/university
大学生	dà xué shēng	n., college student
做	zuò	v., to do
工作	gōng zuò	n./v., work, job; to work
都	dōu	adv., both, all
爱	ài	v., to love
中学	zhōng xué	n., middle school
小学	xiǎo xué	n., elementary school



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Grammar Notes:

1. The question word 几 (jǐ):

It is used to ask *how many?* Note that it is used when asking about small numbers, usually less than 10. In addition, this word is usually followed by a measure word. Example:
几口人? Jǐ kǒu rén? *How many people?* (Note: in most cases, 个 is used before 人 to describe how many of people. 口 is only used to describe family members.)

2. 两 (liǎng) vs 二 (èr) :

The digit “2” is 二, used generally in numbers, when counting to ten, telling a phone number, and so on. 两 is used to say there are “two” of something, generally followed by measure words. For example, “two girls” is translated as “两个女孩子” rather than “二个女孩子”.

3. The question phrase 哪个:

It is used to express “which”. For example, “which is your elder sister” is translated into “哪个(人)是你的姐姐” in Chinese.

4. The adverb 没(méi) :
Chinese people use 没 (rather than 不) to negate the verb 有 (yǒu). The structure is “**Subj. + 没 + 有 + Obj.**“. For example, 我没有弟弟(I don't have a little brother.)
5. 做什么工作 is a way to ask about a person's job or occupation, like “what (job) do you do” in English. To respond to such a question, simply answer with “是 + occupation”. For example, 你做什么工作？我是老师。
6. The adverb 都 (dōu): This word may mean “both” and “all”. It is an adverb, always used before verbs. For example, 我们都是美国人。In this sentence, 都 is used before the verb 是. In addition, Chinese doesn't have a special pattern like “neither/none” for the negative case. Just add 都 before the negative verbs. For instance, 我们都不是美国人。(Neither/none of us are Americans).

Culture Notes:

1. Besides the international numbers that are used in the world (including China), Chinese has its own set of characters for writing numbers, and learning to count in Chinese is very easy because it follows very logical rules. Let's start with the basic numbers from 1 to 10 for now:

一 yī one

二 èr two

三 sān three

四 sì four

五 wǔ five

六 liù six

七 qī seven

八 bā eight

九 jiǔ nine

十 shí ten

2. Most Chinese children call their dads 爸爸 (bà ba) or, even more casually, 爹 (bà), and call their moms 妈妈 (mā ma) or simply 妈 (mā). When referring to both dad and mom casually, they sometimes combine these words and say 爸妈 (bà mā). In northern China, children also call their dad 爹 (diē) and their mom 娘 (niáng) in everyday life. 父亲 (fù qīn, father) and 母亲 (mǔ qīn, mother) are more formal words, used in formal situations.
3. 兄弟姐妹 (xiōng dì jiě mèi , literally elder brother, younger brother, elder sister, younger sister) means “siblings”. The eldest brother is called 大哥, and the eldest sister is 大姐 . The rest are ranked according to their birth order using numerals. For example, the second eldest brother is 二哥, and the third eldest is 三哥. The youngest is 小弟 . Note that Chinese younger siblings normally refer to their elder siblings by their kinship terms rather than their names to show respect.

PART IV

LESSON 3: MY TREAT

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

- ask and answer questions about time, day, week, and year in Chinese.
- talk about birthday and age.
- invite people out for a meal.
- accept or refuse invitations.
- ask for and tell opinions.
- talk about favorite foods.

9. Lesson 3 Dialogue 1: Schedule a time to meet

[Lesson 3 Dialogue 1 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help you practice this dialogue.

Dialogue:

(王贵 and 李小朋 are about to leave the classroom.)

王贵：小朋，你今年多大？

李小朋：二十岁。

王贵：你的生日是哪(一)天？

李小朋：七月十六号。

王贵：七月十六！今天是七月十三号星期一，你的生日是这个星期四。我那天晚上没(有)事儿，我请你吃晚饭，怎么样？

李小朋：谢谢，你人太好了！

王贵：不谢！我们几点见？

李小朋：七点一刻怎么样？

王贵：好。星期四晚上七点一刻见。

李小朋：再见。

王贵：拜拜。

slow-speed reading:



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native speaker:

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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
年	nián	n., year
今年	jīn nián	time word, this year
多	duō	adv., how; to what extent; many
多大	duō dà	question word, how old
岁	suì	n., years old
生	shēng	v., to give birth
日	rì	n., the sun, day
生日	shēng rì	n., birthday
月	yuè	n., month
号	hào	n., day of a month, used when telling calendar
天	tiān	n., day, sky
今天	jīn tiān	n., today
星期	xīng qī	n., week
星期一	xīng qī yī	n., Monday
星期四	xīng qī sì	n., Thursday
请	qǐng	v., to treat someone to a meal
晚上	wǎn shàng	n., night, evening
事(儿)	shì(er)	n., thing
吃	chī	v., to eat
晚饭	wǎn fàn	n., dinner
怎么样	zěn me yàng	phrase, how something is, or what it is like
谢谢	xiè xie	v./n., thanks
星期五	xīng qī wǔ	n., Friday
太	tài	adv., too, excessively
点	dǎn	n., o'clock

Chinese	Pinyin	English
见	jiàn	v., to meet
刻	kè	n., quarter hour
再	zài	adv., again
再见	zài jiàn	v., to see again, Goodbye
拜拜	bāi bai	interjection, bye-bye



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Grammar Notes:

1. 多 (duō, how, to what extent):

It is an adverb, often used before an adjective to ask about the degree or extent of something. The structure is “**Subj. + 多 + Adj. ?**”, meaning “”How [adjective] is [subject]?” In this dialogue, the question phrase 多大 (duō dà) is used to ask “how old”. Another example is 多高, which is used to ask “how tall or high”. For example, 你多大 (How old are you) and 你多高 (How tall are you).

There is another way to ask “how old” in Chinese, i.e., **几岁** (jǐ suì); however, it is most often used for children less than 10 years old. For example, when asking a little kid for his/her age, we normally ask **你几岁**. In this case, we can also ask **你多大**.

2. Chinese numbers 1-100:

Counting in Chinese is very easy, which only requires you to learn 11 numbers: the numbers 1 to 10 and the word for “hundred”. Let’s start with 1-10:

一 (yī, one), 二 (èr, two), 三 (sān, three), 四 (sì, four), 五 (wǔ, five), 六 (liù, six), 七 (qī, seven), 八 (bā, eight), 九 (jiǔ, nine), 十 (shí, ten). Click the link to learn the pronunciation here: [1-10 pronunciation](#).

How do we say the numbers from 11 to 19 in Chinese? “Eleven” is 十一 (shí yī). “Twelve” is 十二 (shí èr). “Thirteen” is 十三 (shí sān). Can you figure out the pattern now?

“Twenty” in Chinese is 二十 (èr shí), meaning “two tens”.

“Thirty” is 三十 (sān shí), meaning “three tens”. Can you say 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 and 90 in Chinese?

100 is 一百 (yī bǎi) in Chinese.

3. 岁 (suì, years old):

It is used to tell a person’s age, similar to “years old” in English. The structure is “**Subj. + Number + 岁**”, which is equivalent to “Subj. is X years old” in English. For example, 我二十岁 (I am twenty years old.) Note that no verb is used when using 岁.

Below are more examples:

我爸爸今年60岁，我妈妈55岁。(My dad is 60 years old this year, and my mom is 55.)

李先生34岁，他的太太30岁。(Mr. Li is 34 and his wife is 30.)

4. Month names:

The way to say months in Chinese is easy: “**Number + 月** (yuè, month)”. Here are all of them: 一月 (yī yuè, January), 二月 (èr yuè, February), 三月 (sān yuè, March), 四月 (sì yuè, April), 五月 (wǔ yuè, May), 六月 (liù yuè, June), 七月 (qī yuè, July), 八月 (bā yuè, August), 九月 (jiǔ yuè, September), 十月 (shí yuè, October), 十一月 (shí yī yuè, November), 十二月 (shí èr yuè, December).

December).

5. Days of the month:

The structure we use to say the days of a month is: “**x** 月 + **x** 号 (hào)/日/(ri)”. For example, “March 8” is 三月八号 or 三月八日. Note: 号 is more commonly used in spoken Mandarin, while 日 is more often used in written Chinese.

6. Year:

The way to say years in Chinese is also easy: “**Number** + 年 (nián)”. For example, to indicate the year 1987, we say “一九八七年(yī jiǔ bā qī nián)”. Note that the numbers are pronounced one at a time.

7. Days of the week:

Days of the week in Chinese are formed by the word 星期 (xīng qī, week), followed by a number: Monday 星期一, Tuesday 星期二, Wednesday 星期三, Thursday 星期四, Friday 星期五, Saturday 星期六, Sunday 星期天/日. Note: (1) Sunday is the only exception. Rather than a number, 天 (tiān) or 日 (rì) is used. 日 is more formally used than 天. (2) In Chinese culture, the first day of the week is Monday rather than Sunday. (3) There are actually two other ways to say 星期 in Chinese: 礼拜 (lǐbài) and 周 (zhōu). So for 星期一, we can also say 礼拜一 or 周一. 星期 is more formal than the other two.

8. Structure of dates:

Dates in Chinese are arranged from the largest unit to the smallest: year, month, day. The structure is “**x** 年 + **y** 月 + **z** 日/号 + 星期 **x**”. For example, “Monday, May 1, 2019” is translated into “2019年5月1日星期一”.

9. 我请你吃晚饭(wǒ qǐng nǐ chī wǎn fàn) :

Literally it is “I treat you to dinner”, meaning “I invite you to dinner, and it is on me”. The structure is “**Subj. + 请 + sb. + do sth.**”. For example, 我请你看电影。(I treat you to a movie).

10. 怎么样 (zěn me yàng):

It is a question phrase, used to ask *how something is, or what it is like*. The structure is “**Subj. + 怎么样?**”. For example, 你的工作怎么样? (how is your work). 我们八点半见, 怎么样? (How

about we meet at 8:30).

11. 太 (tài, too):

It is an adverb, often used before adjectives, then followed by 了. It is used to express that something really is excessive (often as a complaint), or can also colloquially express the meaning of “so” or “very”. The structure is “太 + Adj. + 了”. For example,

那太贵了。(That is too expensive).

你太好了!(You are so nice!)

你的哥哥太帅了!(Your elder brother is too handsome.)

她太美了!(She is excessively pretty.)

Note: When used in a negative sentence, 了 is not needed. For example:

你的哥哥不太帅。她不太美。

12. How to tell time in Chinese?

点(diǎn, o'clock)、半(bàn, half hour)、刻(kè, quarter hour)、分(fēn, minute) are used to tell time.

The structure to tell hours is: “**number of the hour** + 点 (diǎn – o'clock)”. For example, “9 o'clock” is 九点 or 九点钟(diǎn zhōng). 点 is the short form for 点钟. Note: “2 o'clock” is 两点 rather than 二点.

To express “half hour,” we use the word 半(bàn, half). The structure is “**number** + 点半“. For example, “12:30” is 十二点半. The structure to tell minutes is: “**number** + 分 (fēn – minutes)”. For example, “13 minutes” is 十三分.

To indicate “quarters,” we use 刻 (kè, quarter hour). The structure is: “**x点 y刻**“. For example, 5:15 is 五点一刻, and 3:45 is 三点三刻.

In China, people generally use a twelve-hour clock, preceded by 上午 (shàng wǔ) for “a.m.” or 下午 (xià wǔ) for “p.m.” when necessary. 中午 (zhōng wǔ) is used to indicate “noon” or “midday”. If the time is after 6:00 p.m., we normally use 晚上 (wǎn shàng). The structure is “上午/下午/中午/晚上 + **x 点**“. For example, 8:00 a.m. is translated into “上午八点” in Chinese.

13. Placement of time words in Chinese:

Time words can appear either at the beginning of a Chinese sentence (before the subject), or directly after the subject. The structures are: “**Time + Subj. + Verb + Obj.**” or “**Subj. + Time + Verb + Obj.**” For instance,

今天我很忙 and 我今天很忙 are both correct.

Culture Notes:

1. Asking a person's age in China more common than in the West because age defines how Chinese people appropriately and politely address each other. For example, if a guy learns that another guy is older than him, he would call that guy 哥 (gē) or 大哥 (dà gē). Words such as “大哥”/ “哥” or “大姐” (dà jiě)/ “姐” (jiě), “小哥哥” (xiǎo gē ge) or “小姐姐” (xiǎo jiě jie) are common ways Chinese people address the people they know in everyday life, and the word they choose is related to the age difference between the speakers.

Besides 你多大 and 你几岁, there are many other ways to ask for people's ages in Chinese. To learn more about asking people's ages, please [watch this video](#).

2. You may have noticed that in the vocabulary list, there is a word 事(儿). In northern China, people like to add -er sound (儿) to certain syllables in spoken Chinese, as in 事儿 (shìr, thing), 哪儿 (nǎr, where), 一点儿 (yìdiǎnr, a little), and 好玩儿 (hǎo wánr, fun). However, people in the South prefer not to add the -er sound. They would say the four examples listed above without 儿, namely 事 shì, 哪 nǎ, 一点 yì diǎn, 好玩 hǎo wán.
3. 再见 is the most common way for Chinese people to say goodbye. 再 (zài) means “again” and 见 (jiàn) is “to see”, so when they say it to a person, they are expecting to see that person again. 拜拜, a more informal way to say goodbye, is more often used by younger generations.

回头见 (huí tóu jiàn, see you later) or simply 回见(huí jiàn) is

another commonly used expression to bid goodbye. Chinese people use the format of “_ 见” (_ jiàn, “_ see”) to form the expression “see you _ (a certain time)”. For example, 明天见 (míng tiān jiàn, see you tomorrow), 一会儿见 (yīhuǐer jiàn, see you soon).

English speakers would say “have a nice day” when saying goodbye, but Chinese people do not do that. It also sounds unnatural to translate it into Chinese word by word. In formal situations, Chinese people use 保重 (bǎo zhòng, take care) or 好好的 (take care) to express wishes when they say goodbye. In colloquial Chinese, people use specific verbs to wish somebody good or great. For example, 玩得开心点 (wán dé kāi xīn diǎn, have a good time) , 好好休息 (hǎo hǎo xiū xī, have a good rest).

[Learn many other ways to say goodbye in Chinese.](#)

10. Lesson 3 Dialogue 2: It's on me.

[Lesson 3 Dialogue 2 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help you practice listening, reading, and typing.

Dialogue:

（高先生和白小姐是男女朋友。）
白小姐：你爱不爱我？

高先生：爱！

白小姐：那你明天晚上请我和我妹妹吃晚饭，好不好？

高先生：为什么？

白小姐：因为明天是她的生日，可是我爸爸妈妈明天都很忙，不在家，没有人请她吃饭。

高先生：好！那我请你，还请她。

白小姐：你太好了！

高先生：你们喜欢吃哪国菜？中国菜还是美国菜？

白小姐：中国菜和美国菜我都喜欢吃，可是我妹妹不太喜欢。

高先生：那我们吃法国菜，怎么样？

白小姐：三个人吃法国菜！太贵了！

高先生：那日本菜呢？日本菜不太贵。

白小姐：太好了！我跟妹妹都喜欢吃日本菜，因为日本菜很好吃。我现在很饿，你饿不饿？

高先生：我也饿。你想吃什么？我为你

做。

白小姐：我们一起做饭吧！

Slow-speed reading:



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normal speed:



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
白	bái	adj., white; can also be used as a surname
忙	máng	adj., busy
明天	míng tiān	time word, tomorrow
为什么	wèi shén me	question word, why
因为	yīn wèi	conj., because
可是	kě shì	conj., but
在	zài	prep., at, on, in
家	jiā	n., home, family, house
在家	zài jiā	prep. phrase, at home
请	qǐng	v., to treat sb. to a meal
还	hái	adv., and also, in addition
喜欢	xǐ huan	v., to like
还是	háishì	conj., or
跟	gēn	prep., with
现在	xiàn zài	time word, now
法国	fǎ guó	n., France
日本	rì běn	n., Japan
好吃	hǎo chī	adj., good to taste, delicious
饿	è	adj., hungry
为	wèi	preposition, for
一起	yì qǐ	adv., together
做饭	zuò fàn	v., to cook
吧	ba	interjection, put at the end of a sentence to indicate “suggestions”



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Grammar Notes:

1. Affirmative-Negative questions:

“爱不爱” and “好不好” are similar to how in English we say “Do you love me or not?” or “is it good or not?”. They are called affirmative-negative questions. It is a common way to form questions in Chinese. The structure is “V./Adj. 不 V./Adj.“. For example: if we want to say “Do you like to eat Chinese food”, we can say 你喜欢吃中国菜吗 or 你喜欢(不)喜欢吃中国菜.

2. The word 请:

“请我和我妹妹吃晚饭” means “treat me and my sister to a dinner”. The structure is “请 sb. 吃 ...”. In the middle of the dialogue, there is a sentence: “我请你，还请她”. It means the same as the previous one, except that “请 sb. 吃...” is more specific than “请 sb.”.

We have learned the other usage of the word 请: to be polite when making a request. The structure is “请 + verb”. For example, 请问 literally “politely ask” means “May I ask...”

3. Offering choices with 还是 :

In the sentence “中国菜还是美国菜”, “还是” is used in Chinese to provide options in a **question**. This is equivalent to “or” in English. The structure is “Option A 还是 Option B.” When responding to such a question, you can just choose an option, either “Option A” or “Option B.” For example, 你爱我还是他 ? 他。

4. The preposition 为

This word is used to express “for”. The structure is “A + 为 + B + Verb/Adj.”. For example, 我为你做饭 means “I cook for you”. 我们为你高兴 means “We are happy for you.”

5. The word 吧

It is often used at the end of a sentence to indicate “suggestion” or “request”. For example, 我们吃饭吧 means “let's eat”. 你说吧 means “You say”.

6. Compare 还(hái, also, in addition) with 也 (yě, too, also):

These two adverbs are always put before verbs. Both of them mean “also,” but 还 also means “in addition, additionally”. When using them, note:

When two clauses share the same subject, we can use either of them. For example, “I like to eat Chinese food and I also like to eat American food.” We can say “我喜欢吃中国菜，也喜欢吃美国菜”. The word 也 in the sentence can be replaced by 还.

If the two clauses contain two different subjects, we can only use 也. For instance, “I like to eat Chinese food. My boyfriend also likes to eat Chinese food.” The Chinese is “我喜欢吃中国菜，我男朋友也喜欢吃中国菜。”In this sentence, we cannot use 还 because it doesn't make sense to say “my boyfriend, in addition, likes to eat Chinese food”.

Culture Notes:



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PART V

LESSON 4: HOBBIES

Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

- ask about other people's hobbies.
- describe hobbies.
- ask for and provide reasons.
- greet old friends whom you haven't met for a long time.
- introduce people to get to know each other.

II. Lesson 4 Dialogue 1: Talking about hobbies

[Lesson 4 Dialogue 1 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help you practice listening, reading, and typing.

Dialogue:

(Xie Tian and Zhou Yiwei got to know each other at a party. After a brief self-introduction, they started to talk about hobbies.)

谢天：你有什么**爱好**？

周一为：我**爱好**游泳、画画、**看书**。你呢？

谢天：我喜欢学**外语**、玩滑板。你周末常常做什么？

周一为：有时候工作，有的时候**看书**。

谢天：你周末也**工作**吗？不**看电视**吗？

周一为：我家没有电视。我的工作很忙，所以常常没有周末。你呢？你周末喜欢做什么？

谢天：我周末不忙，喜欢**做饭**，我常**请**同事去我男朋友家**吃饭**。

周一为：你**为什么****请**朋友去你男朋友家？

谢天：因为他家很大。

周一为：那你们在他家做什么？

谢天：我**做饭**，他们打游戏、跳舞、唱歌、听**音乐**。

周一为：你的朋友都很喜欢你，对不对？

谢天：对呀！

周一为：我也想跟你做朋友。这个周末我们一

起去看电影，好吗？我请客。

谢天：好。



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
爱好	ài hào	n., hobby; v., to be keen on
周末	zhōu mò	time word, weekend
常常	cháng cháng	adv., often
时候	shí hou	n., time
有(的)时候	yǒu (de) shí hou	adv., sometimes
外语	wài yǔ	n., foreign language
玩	wán	v., to play
滑板	huá bǎn	n., skateboard
游泳	yóu yǒng	n., swimming; v., to swim
画画	huà hua	n., painting/drawing; v., to paint/draw
同事	tóng shì	n., colleague
书	shū	n., book
电视	diàn shì	n., TV
忙	máng	adj., busy
打	dǎ	v., to hit, to beat, to strike
游戏	yóu xì	n., game
打游戏	dǎ yóu xì	v., gaming
跳	tiào	v., to jump, to dance
舞	wǔ	n., dance
跳舞	tiào wǔ	v., to dance
唱	chàng	v., to sing
歌	gē	n., song
唱歌	chàng gē	v., to sing
听	tīng	v., to listen
音乐	yīn yuè	n., music
所以	suǒ yǐ	conj., so/therefore
对	duì	adj., right/correct
呀	ya	interjectory particle to soften a question

Chinese	Pinyin	English
去	qù	v., to go
电影	diàn yǐng	n., movie
请客	qǐng kè	v., to treat someone to a meal



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Grammar Notes:

1. Word order in Chinese:

Chinese word order is very similar to English word order. The basic form is “**Subj. + Predicate**”, where the “predicate” can be a verb, a verb phrase, or an adjective. For example, “I eat” = 我吃, in which “吃” is the predicate.

“I eat Chinese food” = 我吃中国菜. In this sentence “吃中国菜” is a verb phrase.

“I am happy” = 我高兴. Here 高兴 is an adjective, used as the predicate in the sentence. Note that predicative adjectives do not require the use of 是. Here are some more examples:

他哥哥很高。

我姐姐很白。

你弟弟很帅。

2. Placement of time words in Chinese sentences:

In general, time words are put before predicates in Chinese.

For example, “I was happy yesterday” = 我昨天高兴 or 昨天我高兴. As you may have noticed, the time word 昨天 is put before 很高兴, either right before it or before the subject. Another example: 你周末也工作吗, here 周末 is put before the verb phrase 也工作. We can also say 周末你也工作吗.

3. 去 + action verb:

The structure means “to go to do sth.”. For example, 我们去上课。(We go to classes.) If a location is involved, we can put it after 去. For example: 我去他家看电视。(I go to his home to watch TV). Below are more examples:

我们去北京大学打球。(We go to Beijing University to play ball.)

你想去纽约玩一下吗 ? (Do you want to go to New York to play?)

我们去电影院看电影吧。(Let's go to the cinema to watch a movie.)

4. Questions with 好吗:

It is used to ask for opinions after offering a suggestion, equivalent to the phrase 怎么样. For instance, 我们去唱歌, 好吗 ? (Let's go to sing, how about it?) Chinese people also use 好不好 to replace 好吗.

5. The verb phrase 请客 (qǐng kè):

This phrase is a “verb + object” structure, where 请 is the verb and 客 is the object. It is used to talk generally about “treating”. If we want to be more specific about “who” and “do what”, we need to remove 客 and replace it with detailed information, using the structure “请 sb. do sth.”. Compare:

今天我请客。Today it is on me.

今天我请你吃晚饭。Today I will treat you to dinner.

Culture Notes:

Mahjong and square dancing are two popular pastimes in China. Mahjong is often played in spare time and is usually an important form of entertainment for Chinese people during traditional festivals, or with family and friends. [To learn more about this game, please watch this video.](#) Square dancing or plaza dancing is another popular hobby among middle-aged and senior people in China. People dance to a variety of music in public spaces as not only a way to exercise, but also as a social activity. [To learn more about this dance, please watch this video.](#)

Two other popular pastimes in China are the board games Chinese chess and Go. You will often see Chinese people playing these two games in the park or in front of their apartments. The game of Chinese chess is based on the historical story of the last battle between Liu Bang and Xiang Yu. The former became the first emperor of Han Dynasty (202 BC to 220 AD) soon after the battle. When playing the game of Chinese chess, you will lead your army as a general and fight to win the battle conquering your rival. [To learn more about this game, please watch this video.](#)

The game of Go, or Weichi (wéiqí, 围棋), was invented in China more than 2,500 years ago. It is an abstract strategy board game for two players, in which the aim is to surround more territory than the opponent. In China, Go was considered one of the four cultivated arts of the Chinese scholars, along with calligraphy, painting, and playing the musical instrument guqin. The game was introduced to Korea and Japan in the 5th and 7th century CE, and then it was slowly spread to the rest of the world. Now there are over 20 million players throughout the world, and most of them are from East Asia.

12. Lesson 4 Dialogue 2: Meeting old and new friends

[Lesson 4 Dialogue 2 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help you practice listening, typing, and reading.

Dialogue:

(Wang Dazhong and Li Meiying are colleagues in a company. They are drinking coffee in a café. Suddenly, Wang Dazhong's attention gets snatched.)

王大中：你看！那儿有一个美女。你觉得怎么样？

李美英：在哪里？我看一下。嗯—，不错。

王大中：你认(识)不认识她？

李美英：认识，她是我的高中同学。

王大中：你觉得她这个人怎么样？

李美英：她爱学习，是一个很有趣的人。你想认识她吗？

王大中：想。我想跟她聊一下。

李美英：好，我帮你。……张小文！

张小文：啊！李美英，是你！老同学，好久不见。

李美英：你来一下。

张小文：有什么事？

李美英：我的好朋友王大中想认识你。

王大中：张小姐，你好！我叫王大中，

大家都叫我小王。认识你很高兴。

张小文：小王，你好！

王大中：张小姐，今天你好漂亮！

张小文：哪里！

李美英：你们在这儿坐一下吧。我去找别人聊天。



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Vocabulary words:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
那儿	nà ér	n./adv., there
这儿	zhè ér	n./adv., here
美女	měi nǚ	n., pretty lady
漂亮	piào liang	adj., pretty
觉得	jué dé	v., to feel, to think
哪里	nǎ lǐ	question word, where; adv., used to negate predicates
嗯	en	filler word, um
不错	bù cuò	adj., pretty good
老	lǎo	adj., old
同学	tóng xué	n., classmate
高中	gāo zhōng	n., high school
学习	xué xí	n., study; v., to study
有趣	yǒu qù	adj., interesting
帮	bāng	v., to help
好	hǎo	adv., very, very much (often used in colloquial Chinese)
久	jiǔ	adj., very long (time)
好久不见	hǎo jiǔ bù jiàn	expression, Long time no see
啊	a	interjection to express exclamation, ahh
来	lái	v., to come
坐	zuò	v., to sit
找	zhǎo	v., to look for
别人	bié rén	n., other people, another person
聊天	liáo tiān	v., to chat



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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://openbooks.lib.msu.edu/chs101/?p=105#h5p-16>

Grammar Notes:

1. The verb 觉得 (jué dé):

This word has two meanings: “feel” and “think”. In the sentence “你觉得怎么样” from the dialogue, here 觉得 expresses a **feeling, sensation, or perception**. The word 觉得 can also indicate that you are expressing a falsifiable opinion or assertion. You have mulled over a set of facts and have settled on a conclusion. For example,

我觉得她很漂亮。I think she is pretty.

我觉得纽约很大、很美。I think New York is big and pretty.

2. The word 哪里:

哪里 is normally used as a question word, equivalent to “where” in English. The structure is “**Subj. + Verb + 哪里 ?**” 哪里, which is preferred by the Chinese people in the south, can also be used to replace 哪儿, which is preferred by the people in the north. Here are some examples:

你们去哪儿/哪里 ? Where are you going?

他在哪儿/哪里 ? Where is he?

In addition, 哪里 can also be used to negate a verb or an adjective. In the dialogue, 哪里 is used to respond to 你好漂亮, meaning “no, not really”. It can be used in a statement like this 她哪里漂亮, indicating “She is not pretty.”

3. The verb 想 (xiǎng):

This verb is often followed by another verb, indicating “desire or would like to do something”. For example,

我想打球。(I would like to play ball).

你明天想做什么 ? (What would you like to do tomorrow?)

4. The adverb 好 (hǎo):

In colloquial Chinese, people often use 好 to intensify the degree of adjectives, indicating “so” or “really”. The structure is “**Subj. 好 Adj.!**”. In this dialogue, the sentence 她好漂亮 means “she is really pretty”. Here are more examples:

今天我们好忙啊 ! (Today we are so busy.)

北京好大啊 ! (Beijing is so big.)

他这个人好好啊 ! (He is so nice.)

5. Adjectives used as predicates:

In the two sentences: 她好漂亮 and 你好, the adjectives “漂亮” and “好” function as predicates.

In Chinese, when an adjective functions as a predicate, it is not preceded by the verb 是. It is usually modified by adverbs like 很 or 好. For example, 那个男人很高、很帅。(That guy is tall and handsome.)

When forming a question with an adjective as a predicate, the adverbs are usually omitted. For example, to turn the statement 她好漂亮 into a question, we say 她漂亮吗 ?

6. The sentence 有什么事 (yǒu shénme shì):

In this sentence, the subject 你 is omitted. It often occurs in regular conversational Chinese, if both the listener and the speaker know who the latter refers to. The sentence (你)有什么事 can be understood literally as “have what matter”, meaning “what’s the matter?” or “what is this about?”. It is used when

the speaker has an assumption that the listener has something to say, but doesn't know what that is. More examples:

A : 小王。

B : (你)有什么事？

A : 我这个周末请你看电影，怎么样？

Culture Notes:

In China, people often use 老 (lǎo, old) or 小 (xiǎo, little) before surnames instead of their titles. Here are some rules to follow when using them:

1. They are only used when addressing friends, colleagues, neighbors, and acquaintances casually or informally.
2. In general, use “小 + surname” to a person who is younger than you, and use “老 + surname” to an older person to show respect.
3. Generally, “老 + surname” is often used to address a male, while “小 + surname” can be used for both males and females.
4. “老 + surname” can be used to a person who is an acquaintance to you (usually both of you have almost the same age), such as a close friend at school. However, in some cases, close friends will use “老 + surname” as nickname without obvious distinction between ages.
5. To call a person who is quite a bit older than you, but still in your generation, you can call him “surname + 哥” and her “surname + 姐” rather than “老 + surname”. If he/she is in your parents’ generation, call him “surname + 叔” and her “surname + 婶”.
6. In companies, superiors usually call their subordinates “小 + surname”.
7. The best way to determine whether to use “老 + surname” or “小 + surname” is to: (1) See what other people call that person.

(2) Ask him/her which one he/she likes.

[To learn more about how Chinese people address others, please watch this video.](#)

PART VI

LESSON 5: EATING AND DRINKING

Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

- order beverages in a restaurant.
- talk about favorite drinks.
- ask other people about their past experiences.
- describe your own past experiences.

13. Lesson 5 Dialogue 1: What would you like to drink?

[Lesson 5 Dialogue 1 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help students practice listening, reading, and typing.

Dialogue:

(高亮在美国教书，是一个学校的中文老师，美美是他的女儿。)

(高亮敲门。)

美美：谁呀？

高亮：我，你爸爸。

美美：请进！爸，有事儿吗？

高亮：今天是周末，我不想在家做饭，
请你去饭馆吃饭，怎么样？

美美：太好了！

(他们进了一家中国饭馆。)

Waiter: 请问你们想喝点儿什么？

高亮：你们这儿有没有啤酒？

Waiter: 有。美国啤酒、中国啤酒，我们都有的。

高亮：你觉得美国啤酒好喝还是中国啤酒好喝？

Waiter：两个都不错。

高亮：那我要两瓶中国啤酒。

Waiter: 小姐，你呢？

美美：给我一瓶啤酒吧。

Waiter: 请问你今年多大？

美美：十七岁。

Waiter: 我们这儿的咖啡和茶都不错，你可以喝点儿。

美美：可是我只想喝啤酒。你为什么要我喝茶和咖啡？

Waiter：因为你还很小，不能喝酒。

高亮：对！你喝一杯茶吧！喝咖啡也可以。

美美：我想一下。

高亮：想什么？

美美：今天我想十点半睡觉，所以现在喝咖啡、喝茶都不好。我喝奶吧。



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Vocabulary Words:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
教书	jiāo shū	v., to teach (courses)
学校	xué xiào	n., school
敲	qiāo	v., to knock
门	mén	n., door
进	jìn	v., to enter
家	jiā	measure word for establishments (e.g., companies, shops, restaurants, etc.)
饭馆	fàn guǎn	n., restaurant
喝	hē	v., to drink
点儿	diǎn ér	adv., a little, a bit
啤酒	pí jiǔ	n., beer
好喝	hǎo hē	adj., nice to drink
瓶	píng	measure word for bottles
给	gěi	v., to give
咖啡	kā fēi	n., coffee
可以	kě yǐ	v., may; adj., okay, alright
只	zhī	adv., only
杯	bēi	measure word for glasses or cups
茶	chá	n., tea
还	hái	adv., still
能	néng	modal verb, can
想	xiǎng	v., to think
睡觉	shuì jiào	v., to sleep
奶	nǎi	n., milk
要	yào	v., to want



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Grammar Notes:

1. Measure word 家 (jiā)

We have learned that “家” refers to “home” or “family” as a noun, as in “我家有三个人” and “这是我家”. It can also be used as a measure word to describe certain nouns. For examples:

(1) 他们是一家人。(They are a family.) In this example, 家 is used before a group of people to indicate that they make up one entire family.

(2) 那家电影院是他们的。(That cinema is theirs.)
请问你们在哪家饭馆吃饭？(May I ask in which restaurant are you eating?)

In the two sentences above, 家 is used before business establishments 电影院 and 饭馆.

2. The particle 了

了 is a particle, used after a verb to indicate its completion. In the sentence 他们进了一家饭馆, the particle 了 is used after the

verb **进**, meaning the action **进** was completed. Below are more examples:

昨天我唱了歌, 看了电视, 还打了游戏。(Yesterday I sang, watched TV, and played games.)

上个周末他们去了中国。(Last weekend, they went to China.)

2021年, 你们做了什么?(What did you do in 2021?)

Note: The particle **了** is not equal to the past tense in English because the particle **了** can also be used with future tense to indicate an action completed in the future. For example, 明天你去了北京以后回家。

3. 点儿 (diǎn ér):

It means “a little” or “a bit” and is put before a noun, such as —点儿咖啡, 一点儿茶. They are used in much the same way as these words in English. They are used as a generic way to soften the tone of sentences, making them sound more polite or modest. For example, “喝点儿什么” is more polite than “喝什么”. Below are more examples:

吃点儿菜 (eat a little bit of vegetables)

学一点儿中文 (learn a little Chinese)

看点书 (read some books)

Note: “一点儿” is more often heard among people in the north of China. People in the south prefer to say “点”. However, they mean the same.

4. 好 (hǎo) + verb:

The character **好** can be followed by many different verbs to form “好 (hǎo) + verb” combinations, meaning “nice to verb”. For example, 好喝 means “nice to drink” or “delicious”, and 好吃 means “nice to eat” or “tasty”.

5. The adverb 还(hái):

This word is always used before a verb or an adjective, but it has several meanings.

(1) We have learned its meaning of “and also, in addition”. For example, 我喜欢唱歌, 还喜欢跳舞。(I like singing; in addition, I like dancing.) In this sentence, **还** comes before the verb 喜欢 to connect two clauses 我喜欢唱歌 and 喜欢跳舞. The two

clauses connected by “还” share the same subject 我.

(2) In this dialogue, 还 in the sentence 你还很小 means “still,” indicating that the state 小 continues to exist. More examples: 好久不见，你还是这么漂亮。(Long time, no see. You are still so pretty.)

A: 你现在怎么样? B: 还好。(How are you doing now? Still good.)

爷爷六十岁了，还喜欢看书。(Grandpa is sixty, but he still enjoys reading.)

6. The verb 要 (yào)

It has multiple meanings. In this dialogue, we will focus on the meaning of “to want, to request”.

(1) In the sentence from the dialogue “我要两瓶啤酒” (I want two bottles of beer), you can see that the verb 要 is directly followed by 啤酒. The structure is “**Subject + 要 + something**”, which is often used to buy things or order food in restaurants. More examples:

请问您要什么? (May I ask what you want to order/buy?)

我要一杯奶。(I want to order a cup of milk)

谢谢，我不要咖啡，我要茶。(Thanks. I don't want to order coffee. I want tea.)

(2) In the sentence from the dialogue “你为什么要我喝茶和咖啡” (Why did you ask me to drink tea and coffee). The structure is “**Subject + 要 + object + verb phrase**”, which is often used when you request/ask/demand/order others to do something. For example,

妈妈要我去你家吃饭。(Mom asked me to go to your home to eat.)

爸爸要我跟他去打球。(Dad asked me to go to play ball with him.)

7. The verb 想 (xiǎng)

It has multiple meanings. Study the sentences below:

(1) 我想一下。(Let me think for a moment)

(2) 今晚我想十点半睡觉。(I wish or hope to go to sleep at 10:30 tonight.)

(3) 现在我不想喝咖啡。(Now I don't want to drink coffee.)
(4) 我想你，你想我吗？(I miss you. Do you miss me?)

8. Measure words 瓶 (píng) and 杯 (bēi) :

The new measure words 瓶 and 杯 are used between numbers and nouns. 瓶 can be used for water, wine, liquid, etc., meaning “bottle”. For example, 两瓶啤酒 (two bottles of beer).

杯 is used for beverage, including water, tea, coffee, wine, etc., meaning “cup; glass; mug”. For example, 三杯啤酒 means “three glasses of beer”.

9. The modal verb 能 (néng):

能 is often used before verbs to indicate possibility of something happening. It is used in the following two ways:

(1) It is used in negative sentences, indicating “not allow” or “forbid”. For example, 你不能喝酒 means “You are not allowed to drink alcohol.” 这儿不能游泳 means “You cannot swim here.”

(2) It is used to form polite questions, meaning “would it be possible”. For example, 你能帮我一下吗 means “Would it be possible that you help me?” 老师，我能说英文吗 means “Teacher, may I speak English.”

Culture Notes:

1. Chinese people drink hot water all year around, whether it is winter or summer, day or night. They do not drink cold water from the tap (the majority of the tap water in China is not safe for drinking, so it is boiled and then stored in thermoses), and they seldom drink iced water because hot water is believed to have health benefits and helps ward off illnesses.
Besides hot water, tea is also popular among the Chinese because it is an important part of Chinese tradition. Tea is valued not only for its good smell and taste, but also for its perceived health and digestive benefits. Offering the guests a cup of tea is a long-standing tradition, as well as drinking tea

before or after a meal. There are many kinds of teas, including green tea, black tea, flower tea, herbal tea, Oolong tea, Jasmine tea, Chrysanthemum tea; the list goes on and on. [To learn more about tea history in China, please watch this video.](#)

Nowadays, Chinese people drink a variety of beverages, including tea, coffee, milk tea, soybean milk, coconut milk, soda, cola, etc.

2. Under the Minors Protection Law of China, the sale of cigarettes or alcohol to minors (“minors” refers to citizens under the age of 18) is prohibited, and business operators shall put up a sign, saying they will not sell cigarettes or alcohol to minors, in a prominent place. If it is hard to tell whether the buyer is an adult or not, he/she shall be required to show his/her identity card.

However, this law is NOT strictly enforced due to China’s traditional alcohol culture. China has 4,000 years’ history of liquor drinking and it has become part of the daily life, whether it is when eating dinner at home, celebrating holidays, getting together with friends, spending nights out in cities, or conducting business meetings.

Unlike the West’s freestyle way of drinking, the Chinese way is more controlled, ritualized and purposeful. Chinese business people prefer to make business deals with several cups of alcohol. Friends and family members also like to have several rounds of drinks at festivals or during regular social gatherings.

14. Lesson 5 Dialogue 2: What did you do?

[Lesson 5 Dialogue 2 interactive exercises](#) are designed to help students practice listening, reading, and typing.

Narration:

小常在中国的一个大学图书馆工作。昨天是他的生日，所以他请了八个同事去他家玩儿。小张没去，因为他昨天跟女朋友去约会了。可是我不忙，所以我去了。小常为我们准备了很多好吃的菜，有披萨、寿司，还有很多中国菜。他还为我们准备了很多饮料，有白酒、红酒、可乐和水，还有别的。我不渴，只喝了两听啤酒。我们在一起聊天、K歌、玩游戏，很好玩儿。我玩到晚上十二点才回家。那时候，我的爸妈都睡觉了。



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
昨天	zuó tiān	time word, yesterday
约会	yuē huì	n., dating; v., to date
准备	zhǔn bèi	v., to prepare; n., preparation
披萨	pī sà	n., pizza
寿司	shòu sī	n., sushi
饮料	yǐn liào	n., beverage
水	shuǐ	n., water
渴	kě	adj., thirsty
可乐	kě lè	n., cola
K歌	kēi gē	v., to sing karaoke songs
玩	wán	v., to play, to have fun
好玩	hǎo wán	adj., fun, interesting
别的	bié de	adj., other
到	dào	prep., to, till
回	huí	v., to go/come back, to return
回家	huí jiā	verb phrase, to go home
吧	ba	particle, used at the end of a sentence to communicate some level of uncertainty, or to make an educated guess about something.
才	cái	adv., as late as, not...until
白酒	bái jiǔ	n., a strong Chinese liquor (around 40–60% alcohol)
红	hóng	adj., red
红酒	hóng jiǔ	n., red wine
图书馆	tú shū guǎn	n., library
听	tīng	measure word for an airtight container made of tinplate or aluminium



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Grammar Notes :

1. The word 好玩:

The adjective 好玩 is formed by putting the adverb 好 before the verb 玩, meaning “nice/pleasant to play with”. This is a way to form adjectives in Chinese, i.e., “好 + verb”. For example, we have learned 好吃、好喝、好看.

2. The particle 了 :

了 is a particle, used after a verb to indicate its completion. In the example 我去了, 了 is used after the verb 去, meaning the action 去 was completed. More examples:

上个星期你去了哪里 ? (Where did you go last week?)

我去了小张的家。 (I went to Xiao Zhang's home.)

你们做了什么 ? (What did you do?)

我们吃了一点儿菜, 喝了一点儿酒, 还唱了歌, 跳了舞。 (We ate a little food, drank a little wine, sang, and danced.)

Note: The particle 了 is not equal to the past tense in English because the particle 了 can also be used with future tense to

indicate an action completed in the future. For example, 明天你去了北京以后回家。

3. The adverb 才:

It is always used before verbs to indicate “as late as...”, “not... until”. For example, we have this sentence from the dialogue: 我两点才回家。This sentence means “I didn’t come home until 2:00 a.m.”. In this sentence, the word 才 is an adverb, used before the verb phrase 回家 to indicate “as late as”. More examples:

爸爸昨天晚上七点才回来。(Last night Dad didn’t come back until 7:00 pm.)

妈妈八点才做早饭。(Mom didn’t prepare breakfast until 8.)

我晚上十一点半才睡觉。(I didn’t go to bed until 11:30 pm.)

4. The preposition 到

到 can be used in the prepositional phrase to introduce the time of the action, indicating the status of the action to this time. The structure is “verb + 到 + time”. For example:

他昨天学到了十一点。(He studied till/to 11:00 PM yesterday.)

我玩到晚上十点才回家。(I didn’t go back home until I played till 10:00 PM.)

5. The word 别的:

This is an adjective, often used before a noun. For example, 别的人 (other people). In the dialogue, there is a sentence containing this word: 没有问我喝了别的酒没有。([You] didn’t ask me whether I had drunken other wine or not.) Here 别的 is an adjective, used before the noun 酒 to modify it.

Culture Notes:

1. In China, partying is normally done on weekends when people are not busy. If you are invited to a Chinese friend’s party, here are a few things to observe:

- **Prepare a small gift.** Your Chinese host may tell you not to bring anything. Actually, they're just being polite. In the Chinese culture, visiting a friend empty-handed is considered impolite. Bringing fruit, chocolates, or souvenir products from your home country would be welcomed.
- **Be on time.** In China, showing up on time is a way to show your appreciation and respect to the host.
- **Greet all people in the house.** Start from the most senior, proceeding down the social scale, or as many as you can see from where you are. A simple “ni hao” or “hello” would be okay.
- **Take your shoes off** and change into a pair of home slippers your host provides. Your host would probably tell you it's okay to wear your shoes, but it is more polite to take them off.
- Your Chinese friend **might offer to show you around.** Don't look around without informing your friend.

2. In Chinese, there are some borrowed words from English. They are directly transliterated from English pronunciations. They only imitate the English pronunciations but make no sense literally. Given the differences between Chinese and English in phonetic system, they can only take their approximation. Below are some related to food:

咖啡, kā fēi, coffee

可乐, kě lè, cola

可口可乐, kě kǒu kě lè, coco cola

巧克力, qiǎo kè lì, chocolate

披萨, pī sà, pizza

汉堡, hàn bǎo, hamburger

派, pài, pie

三明治, sān míng zhì, sandwich

土司, tǔ sī, toasted bread (the translation comes from the pronunciation “toast”)

威士忌, wēi shì jì, whisky

香槟, xiāng bīn, champagne

柠檬, níng méng, lemon

PART VII

LESSON 6: MAKING PHONE CALLS

Learning Objectives:

After this lesson, you will be able to:

1. learn how to make a phone call in Chinese.
2. talk about availability on the phone.
3. end a phone call politely.

15. Lesson 6 Dialogue 1: Leaving a message

Dialogue:

(张友生给高大中打电话。)

张友生: 喂, 请问高大中在吗?

室友: 对不起, 他不在。您哪位?

张友生: 我叫张友生, 是大中的同学。

你知道他到哪儿去了吗?

室友: 他到学校去上课了。

张友生: 那他什么时候回来?

室友: 他今天有两节课, 晚上七点以后才回来。请问你有什么事? 要不要留言?

张友生: 好。请你告诉他, 下个星期一我们有一个数学考试, 可是我有两个问题不太懂, 想问一下他。要是他今天晚上有时间, 请他给我回个电话。我等他的回电。谢谢!

室友: 别客气! 拜拜!



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
对不起	duì bù qǐ	phrase, sorry
给	gěi	prep., to/for
电话	diàni huà	n., telephone
给...打电话	gěi ... dǎ diàni huà	verb phrase, give somebody a call
喂	wéi	greeting used to start a phone call
室友	shì yǒu	n., roommate
位	wèi	measure word for people
以后	yǐ hòu	conj. or prep., after
考试	kǎo shì	n./v., exam; to take an exam
节	jié	measure word for classes
课	kè	n., class, lesson
上课	shàng kè	v., to have/teach classes
知道	zhī dào	v., to know
时间	shí jiān	n., time
问题	wèn tí	n., problem
要	yào	v., to want
到	dào	v. to go to
留言	liú yán	v., to leave a message
别	bié	adv., don't
下个	xià gè	adj., next
等	děng	v., to wait
数学	shù xué	n., math
懂	dǒng	v., to understand
要是	yào shì	conj., if
回	huí	v., to return
告诉	gào sù	v., to tell

Chinese	Pinyin	English
客气	kè qì	adj., polite



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Grammar Notes:

1. The preposition 给 (gěi) :

As a preposition, 给 helps show the *target* of a verb. There are two structures: (1) **Subj. + 给 + Target + Action**; and (2) **Subj. + Action + 给 + Target**. For example, “I called him yesterday” can be translated into either 我昨天给他打了电话 or 我昨天打了电话给他。However, the first structure is more often used than the second. Below are more examples:

妈妈给我们做饭。

好朋友给我唱了歌。

2. The modal verb 要 (yào) :

要 has several meanings.

(1) It can indicate a future action, particularly a scheduled

event or an activity that one is committed to. The negative form is expressed by adding 不 and deleting 要. For example, 今天下午我要考试。In this sentence, 考试 is a scheduled event that I am committed to. Its negative form is 今天下午我不考试。More examples:

明天我要去中国。(Tomorrow I will go to China [as scheduled].)

今天我们要上课。(Today we will have classes [as scheduled].)

(2) It can mean “to want, to desire”. For example,

我要吃饭。(I want to eat.)

你要喝水吗?(Do you want to drink water?)

我的儿子要睡觉。(My son wants to sleep.)

3. Time expressions with 上/下:

When talking about weeks and months, 上 is used to describe past time and 下 is used to describe future time. For example, 上个星期 means “last week” and 下个星期 means “next week”. As you may have guessed by now, 上个月 means “last month” and 下个月 means “next month”.

Guess what the following expressions mean: 上上个星期、这个星期、下下个星期、上上个月，这个月，下下个月

4. The conjunction 要是:

“要是...，就...” is used to mean “if..., then...”. It is often used in colloquial Chinese. For example,

要是你喜欢吃中国菜，我们就吃中国菜。(If you like to eat Chinese food, let's do it.)

要是你没空，就别来。(If you are not available, do not come.)

要是你没有女朋友，我可以给你介绍一个。(If you don't have a girlfriend, I can introduce one to you.)

5. The preposition 以后

It is often used to describe the events after a specific time. The structure is “Time + 以后...”, indicating that “after Time, something happens”. The only difference is that in Chinese 以后 should be put after the specific time while in English “after” is put before the time. For example,

下午三点以后他回家了。(After 3:00 PM, he went home.)

一个月以后我要去北京。(In one month, I will go to Beijing.)

6. The adverb 别 (bié) :

It is used to advise somebody not to do something. It is used to deny a future action, similar to the English “don’t”. For example, “don’t give him a call” is translated into 别给他打电话。Note the adverb 别 is always put before verbs or adjectives.

Culture Notes:

When answering a phone call, Chinese people would normally say 喂 (wéi) “hello/hey” or 喂, 你好 (wéi nǐ hǎo) for more formal phone calls.

Then they need to ask who is speaking: 请问是哪位? or 请问你是...? —Who is this? To answer the questions, simply say “我是...” —“I am...” or 这是 + name of the company —“This is...” if you are talking on behalf of an organization.

If the person who picks up your phone call isn’t the person you want to speak to, you can ask “the name of the person + 在吗?” or “name of the person + 在不在? —“Is ... there?”. If the person is present, they would say “请稍等一下 (qǐng shāo děng yīxià)” —Hold on a second, please. If not present, they would say “他/她不在” —He/she is not here. Then they would probably ask you to leave a message by saying “要留言吗 —Can I take a message?

When ending the phone call, they normally say “我先挂了 (wǒ xiān guà le)” —I’ll hang up first.

16. Lesson 6 Dialogue 2: Calling a Friend

Dialogue:

（**张**学友是一位数学老师。他接了一个
电话。）
杨爱文：喂，是学友吗？
张学友：我就是。您哪位？
杨爱文：我，爱文。
张学友：什么事？
杨爱文：我想请你帮一下我儿子。
张学友：怎么了？
杨爱文：他上小学五年级，但是他不太
用功，学习不太好。昨天他在家做数学
练习题，问我几个问题，我也不懂，
所以想请你帮他一下。
张学友：行。可是我现在在办公室上
班，下午两点得跟同事们开一个会，所
以不太方便。
杨爱文：那你什么时候有空？
张学友：我五点下班，六点才到家。你
儿子几点下课？
杨爱文：他下午四点就下课。要是你觉
得方便，我和儿子七点跟你在星巴克试
面，好吗？
张学友：没问题。现在我还有一节课，
得去上课了。
杨爱文：那你去忙吧，我挂了。



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
接	jiē	v., to pick up
接电话	jiē diàni huà	v., to take a phone call
杨	yáng	a popular surname in China
上	shàng	v., to go to
年级	nián jí	n., grade
用功	yòng gōng	adj., hard-working, diligent
题	n., question/problem items; title, topic	
几	jǐ	adj., several, a few, a couple of
怎么了	zěn me le	question word, used to ask “what's happened”, “what's the matter”
练习	liànxí	v./n., to practice/exercise
办公室	bàn gōng shì	n., office
开会	kāi huì	v., to have a meeting
就	jiù	adv., as early as adv., used before verbs or prepositional phrases to indicate emphasis
但是	dàn shì	conj., but
得	děi	modal verb, have to/must
见面	jiàn miàn	v., to meet
行	xíng	adj., alright/okay
上班	shàng bān	v., to go to work, to work
下班	xià bān	v., to finish work
下课	xià kè	v., to finish classes
方便	fāng biàn	adj., convenient
空	kòng	n., availability, free time
星巴克	xīng bā kè	translation from the English word “Starbucks”
挂	guà	v., to hang



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Grammar Notes:

1. The modal verb 得 (děi):

It is often followed by a verb or a verbal phrase, meaning “need to”, “have to”, or “must”. For example,

你得好好学中文。(You must work hard on Chinese.)

现在是八点半，太晚了，我得回家。(Now it's 8:30 pm. It's too late. I have to go home.)

今天是周末，我得给我爸妈打电话。(Today is weekend. I need to call my parents.)

2. The character 几

We have learned this character before. It is often followed by measure words, used to ask quantity questions, meaning “how many”. For example:

你喝几杯咖啡？(How many cups of coffee do you drink?)

你有几个姐姐？(How many big sisters do you have?)

In this dialogue, 他问了我几个问题 is not about quantity questions. Here 几个问题 means “several questions”. More examples:

上个星期他认识了几个女人。(Last week, he got to know several women.)

下个月我有几个考试。(Next month I will have a couple exams.)

3. The adverb 就 (jiù):

In this dialogue, it has two meanings:

First, it means “as early as”. It is often used before a verb to indicate that something happened earlier or sooner than expected. For example, 我现在就给他打电话。(I will call him now.) In this sentence, 就 is used before the verb phrase “给他打电话” to indicate that this action will happen soon.

Second, 就 is often used before verb phrases or prepositional phrases to “add emphasis”. In this sense, it often has an intense or provocative feel to it, similar to “just.” For example, in the sentence 他就是我的爸爸, the character 就 is used before the verb 是 to emphasize the fact 是我的爸爸.

4. The verb phrase 见面 (jiàn miàn) :

见面 is a “verb + object” structure, where 见 is the verb and 面 is the object. Note: (1) When using this phrase, no objects are needed. (2) 见面 is often used with words like 和 or 跟. For example, 我想跟他见面。(I want to meet him.)

见 has the same meaning as 见面; however, 见 is often often by an object. For example, 我想见他。(I want to meet him.) This sentence has the same meaning as 我想和/跟他见面。

5. The sentence 你(去)忙吧 :

This sentence is often used at the end of a conversation, meaning “I won’t bother you. You carry on”. It is another informal way to end a conversation between family members, close friends, and colleagues.

6. The question expression 怎么了 :

It is often used to ask “what has happened”, “what’s up”, “what’s wrong”, or “what’s the problem”. Here is an example:

A : 明天我不能去你家玩。(I cannot go to your home tomorrow.)
B : 怎么了? (What has happened?)

A : 下个星期我有一个考试, 明天得在家准备一下。(Next week I will have an exam. Tomorrow I have to stay home to prepare

for it.)

Culture Notes:

1. Telephone numbers in China are organized according to the Chinese Telephone Code Plan. Land lines and mobile phones follow different systems. Land lines use area codes, with the numbers having a two or three-digit area code followed by a seven or eight-digit inner number. However, mobile phones do not use area codes, and the numbers consist of eleven digits in the format 1XX-XXXX-XXXX, in which the first three digits (13X to 19X) designate the mobile phone service provider. For example, 139-1092-8765 is a complete mobile phone number. When people call Chinese number from overseas, they should dial + country code phone number (e.g. (+86) 139-1092-8765).
2. There are many ways to end a phone call politely. Here are three of them:
 - Apologize, and then end the call: 对不起，我先挂了。(duì bù qǐ, wǒ xiān guà le). Sorry, I'll hang up first.
 - Explain briefly, and then end the call: 我有事儿，先挂了。(wǒ yǒu shì ér, xiān guà le). I have things to do. I'll hang up first.
 - Be considerate: 你忙吧，我们以后再聊。(nǐ máng bā, wǒ mén yǐ hòu zài liáo). You carry on. Let's chat later.

[To learn more about other ways to end a call, please watch this video.](#)

PART VIII

LESSON 7: LEARNING

CHINESE

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

1. comment on one's performance on an exam.
2. talk about experiences of learning something.
3. give reasons about why doing something is easy or not.
4. discuss the reason for doing or not doing something.

17. Lesson 7 Dialogue I: Learning Chinese is cool

Narration:

我喜欢学中文，觉得学中文是一个很酷的事儿，而且我的老师教中文教得真不错，所以我觉得中文很容易学。平常我的学习习惯很好，天天预习和复习功课。我的中文常常考得很好。所以老师常常夸我，说我的中文学得不错。但是我不喜欢写汉字，因为写汉字有点难，而且我写得很慢。我的老师常常说我们很难，而且我们写得慢。明天我们上第八课，说生词，我们写。明天我们上第八课，有一个听写考试，我得去准备一下，练习一下写汉字。



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
酷	kù	adj., cool
平常	píng cháng	adv., usually
习惯	xí guàn	n., habit
得	de	particle, see grammar notes below
第	dì	prefix for ordinal numbers, see grammar notes
天天	tiān tiān	time word, every day
功课	gōng kè	n., lesson, assignment
难	nán	adj., difficult
容易	róng yì	adj., easy
有点儿	yǒu diǎn ér	adv., a little bit, somewhat, rather
复习	fù xí	v., to review
预习	yù xí	v., to preview
写	xiě	v., to write
汉字	hàn zì	n., Chinese characters
夸	kuā	v., praise, brag, boast
而且	ér qiě	conj., moreover, in addition
听写	tīng xiě	n., dictation; v., to dictate
生词	shēng cí	n., new words
真	zhēn	adv., really
慢	màn	adj., slow
怎么	zěn me	question word, how



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Grammar Notes:

1. Descriptive complement:

The particle 得 is often used after a verb or an adjective to describe the verb before it, as in the structure: **Verb / Adj. + 得 + Descriptive complement**. For example, 我写得慢。In this sentence, 得慢 is the descriptive complement, used to describe the verb 写. It is similar to the English word “slowly”. Here are more examples:

我的中文老师说得很快。(My Chinese teacher speaks Chinese fast.)

她唱得很好听。(She sings well.)

你学得很好。(You learned well.)

2. The adverb 真 (zhēn):

It is used only in exclamatory sentences and comes before an adjective. For example, 你真好! (“you are truly nice”). In this sentence, 真 is used to modify 好. More examples:

他真帅！

你们真漂亮！

美国真大啊！

3. Ordinal numbers:

Chinese ordinal numbers are formed by adding the prefix 第 (dì) before cardinal numbers, which you can see from 第一 (the first) and 第二 (the second). Note that when adding a noun after a Chinese ordinal numbers, we must add a measure word in between, as in the structure “**第 + Number + Measure Word + Noun**“. For instance, 第一个学生 (the first student), 第三家饭馆 (the third restaurant).

4. The phrase 有一点儿:

This phrase can be shortened as 有点 or 有一点. In the north, Chinese people would prefer to add -er sound after the phrase, so they would say 有点儿 or 有一点儿. It is used before an adjective, used to express a tone of complaint by the speaker, or some other form of negative impression. It doesn't just mean “a bit,” but rather “a bit too” from the speaker's perspective. For example, 中文有点儿难。This sentence indicates that the speaker is complaining that Chinese is a bit too difficult. More examples:

法国菜有点儿贵。(French food is a bit too expensive.)

日语有点儿难学。(Japanese is a bit too difficult to learn.)

老师说得有点儿快。(The teacher speaks a bit too fast.)

Culture Notes:

Chinese characters have two versions: traditional and simplified Chinese. Traditional Chinese was originally the standard written system in all Chinese-speaking regions. In the 1950s and 1960s, the simplified characters used today were developed and implemented by the government of the People's Republic of China to help improve China's literacy rates. As its name suggests, simplified characters contain fewer strokes and look much simpler than traditional characters, which makes writing Chinese much easier. For example,

compare 說話 (traditional) with 说话 (simplified), as well as 張 (traditional) and 张 (simplified).

Note that not all Chinese characters have been simplified because some are already so simple that there is no need to change them. There are many such characters, including: 上、下、我，好，人.

Today, simplified Chinese is officially used in mainland China, Singapore, and Malaysia. Traditional Chinese is still used in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau regions.

I8. Lesson 7 Dialogue 2: The beginning of a class

Dialogue:

(老师进了教室。)

老师：上课！

同学们：老师早！

老师：同学们，早上好！

Tom：报告！

老师：Tom，你迟到了。你今天怎么这么晚？怎么现在才来？

Tom：对不起，老师。今天早上我爸妈没叫我，所以我起晚了。

老师：以后别迟到，快进来。现在我们开始上课。今天我们学习第八课的生词和对话，还有语法。你们都预习了吗？

同学们：预习了。

老师：太好了！学新课文以前，我们有一个听写小测试。请大家准备一张纸和一支笔。快一点儿！Jenny，你怎么没有笔？Mike，你的纸呢？好，现在我们开始。我念一个生词，你们写一个，懂了吗？

同学们：懂了。

(听写小测试以后)

老师：下面我们开始学对话，请你们听

一遍录音，再回答我的问题。如果你们想回答问题，请举手。



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
教室	jiào shì	n., classroom
报告	bào gào	v., to report
早	zǎo	adj., early
早上	zǎo shàng	time word, morning
这么	zhè me	adv., so
晚	wǎn	adj., late
迟到	chí dào	v., to arrive late
起	qǐ	v., to get up
以后	yǐ hòu	adv., in the future
快	kuài	adj., fast
开始	kāi shǐ	v., to start, to begin
对话	duì huà	n., dialogue, conversation; v., to converse
语法	yǔ fǎ	n., grammar
纸	zhǐ	n., paper
支	zhī	measure word for pens, pencils, etc.
笔	bì	n., a general noun for pens, pencils, etc.
新	xīn	adj., new
课文	kè wén	n., text
以前	yǐ qián	conj., before
测试	cè shì	n., test
遍	biàn	measure word, indicating “times” like once, twice, three times
录音	lù yīn	v./n., to record; recording
念	niàn	v., to read aloud
下面	xià miàn	adv./adj., next, the following
如果	rú guǒ	conj., interchangeable with 要是 except that it is more used in formal situations
回答	huí dá	v., to answer, to respond
举	jǔ	v., to raise
手	shǒu	n., hand



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Grammar Notes:

1. Questions with 怎么(zěn me, how; how come):

We have learned that the question word 怎么 can be used when asking “how?”. For example, 你怎么写这个字? How do you write this character? In this dialogue, there is a sentence 今天怎么没有去上课, where 怎么 is used to ask “why?” or “how come?”. When used this way, it is similar to the question word 为什么 (wèishénme). The structure is: “**Subj.** + 怎么 (+ 不/没) + **Verb** + **Obj.**?”. For instance, 你怎么没做功课 ? How come you didn't do your assignments? When using 怎么 to ask why, the speaker conveys an emotion.

When asking “why?” or “how come?”, 怎么 can also be followed by adjectives, as in the structure: “**Subj.** + 怎么 (+ 不) + **Adj.**”. Here is an example: 你怎么不高兴 ? How come you are unhappy?

怎么 can also be followed by 这么(zhème)/那么(nàme) plus adjectives to express the feeling of disbelief, as in the

structure: “**Subj.** + 怎么 + 这么/那么 + **Adj.**“. For example, 你怎么这么好？他怎么那么帅？

2. The adverb 才 :

It is used before verbs to express that something happened later than expected, translated as “as late as”/”not...until...”.

This word is often used with a specific time, as in the structure: “**Subj.** + **Time** + 才 + **Verb**“. For example, 我今天早上九点才起来。I got up as late as 9 a.m. this morning.

3. Compare 才 (cái) with 就 (jiù) :

Differences: 才 implies a sense of lateness, while 就 indicates a sense of earliness.

Similarities: (1) both are adverbs used before verbs; (2) both have to do with expressing time.

Examples: 爸爸晚上十一点才睡觉。(Dad didn't sleep until 11.) 爸爸晚上九点就睡觉了。(Dad went to bed as early as 9 p.m.) Note that 就 is often used with 了, while 才 is not.

4. Differences between 一点儿 and 有点儿:

有(一)点(儿) is placed before an adjective, expressing a tone of complaint by the speaker, or some other form of negative impression. It doesn't just mean “a bit,” but rather “a bit too” (for the speaker's liking). For example, 第七课有点儿难。(Lesson 7 is a bit too difficult.)

(一)点(儿) is placed before a noun, indicating “some,” “a little,” or “a bit” used in the same way as these words in English. For example, 我想听点儿音乐。I would like to listen to some music. Note that when using the two phrases in spoken Chinese, the Chinese people in the North would prefer to add 儿 sound, while the people in the South would not.

5. The conjunction 以前

This word means “before”. Similar to English, it can be used as either a preposition or a conjunction. However, unlike in English, it is placed after the time phrase or the verb phrase. When using it in a Chinese sentence, the structure is “Event/Action/Time + 以前, ...”. For example, 睡觉以前, 我看书。(Before going to bed, I read books.)

学对话以前，我们学生词。(Before learning the dialogue, we will study the new words.)

九点以前，你做了什么？(Before nine, what did you do?)

6. The particle 了 indicating “change of status”

When the particle 了 is placed after adjectives or non-action verbs, it often indicates a change of status. For instance, in the sentence 你们懂了吗, the particle 了 is put after the non-action verb 懂, indicating the change of status from “not understand” to “understand”. Here are some more examples:

我饿了。

我渴了。

妈妈老了。

她不高兴了。

Culture Notes:

Chinese culture values education a lot, and therefore it has a very strict educational system, especially in the 1-12 setting. Here are some behavior etiquettes you should know:

- A typical class usually starts with the greetings between students and their teacher. The teacher would say “上课”. The whole class would stand up and reply with “老师好”. In more traditional classes, students would do it with a bow, and the teacher bows back. It is believed that this practice demonstrates mutual respect and helps students get into the classroom mode quickly.
- Class attendance is mandatory in China, and being punctual for class is normally required as a school rule. If a student is late for class, he/she would have to stand at the classroom door and say “报告 bao4 gao4” to get the teacher's attention and permission to enter the classroom. Normally the teacher would allow the student to go in if he/she is not very late and

the reason for being late is reasonable. Otherwise, he/she will be punished by standing at the door or in the back of the classroom for the whole period of class.

- When answering the teacher's questions, students are normally required to raise their hands.
- Leaving in the middle of class to use the restroom or get some drinks is considered VERY rude and disruptive.
- It is impolite for students to pack their schoolbags before the teacher finishes class. Wait until the teacher says 下课.