SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Survival Phrases - Chinese (Part 1)
Lessons 1-30

Stop! Before you go on...Learn more Chinese at ChineseClass101.com!

Get your FREE Lifetime Account at www.ChineseClass101.com/survival1 now!

Learn twice as much, twice as fast with Survival

Phrases - Chinese and ChineseClass101.com together!

In fact, most people who learn with Survival

Phrases - Chinese become members of ChineseClass101.com.

It's FREE to join, and you'll get a special ChineseClass101.com member only training guide: 10 Best Ways to Learn Chinese Fast.

So what are you waiting for?

Click here to get your FREE Lifetime Account in less than a minute!

Dear Valued Customer,

Start speaking Chinese in minutes, and grasp the language, culture and customs in just minutes more with Survival Phrases - Chinese, a completely new way to master the basics of Chinese! Survival Phrases - Chinese will have you speaking with proper pronunciation from the very first lesson and arm you with cultural insight and other information to utterly shock and amaze your friends travel companions and people you meet along the way.

In Survival Phrases - Chinese you will master Chinese and protocol for the following situations:

Part 1 (Lessons 1-30)

★ Basic Greetings, etiquette and manners

★ Basic survival communication for every situation

★ Ordering the food you want at restaurants

★ Table manners that will impress!

★ Basic Counting

★ Internet Cafe, not as easy as you think!

★ Finding your way in the local market and SHOPPING

★ Money exchange and tips on money usage

★ Taking the subway, long distance trains, and buses with confidence

Be sure to read the lesson notes for additional tips and information that will make learning basic Chinese and Chinese culture even easier.

Best regards,

Survival Phrases - Chinese

P.S. Don't miss your opportunity to get something for nothing!

Go to ChineseClass101.com/survival1 and sign up for your

FREE lifetime account and learn even more Chinese.

P.P.S. Continue on with Survival Phrases - Chinese (Part 2) Lessons 31-60 also available for purchase.

In Part 2 the following are just a few of the topics you'll master:

★ Taking a taxi without being taken advantage of

★ Getting around and asking directions and actually understanding the answer!

★ Learning Chinese using Chinese, and making lots of friends in the process

★ Making the most of a hotel stay, and exploring alternatives to the beaten path

★ Visiting the Post office and mailing thing home

★ Phone rentals and phone cards, don't travel without one!

★ Critical phrases for vegetarians and allergy suffers!

★ Talking to the doctor and explaining symptoms correctly

★ Getting the right medicine

★ Expressing yourself with adjectives and being understood

★ Home visits and proper protocol that will "wow" hosts

★ Getting help, this may be the most useful phrase you ever learn

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 1: Thank You!

谢谢你。Xiè xie nǐ.

LESSON NOTES

Today's lesson covered a phrase there is no excuse not bring with you to China. In Chinese there are several ways to express ones gratitude; however by far the most common phrase used to express ones thanks is xiè xie (Thank you.). This is undoubtedly the phrase of gratitude you will here the most throughout your journeys, and conveniently the easiest to pronounce.

As Chinese is a tonal language, it is important to correctly pronounce the tones, as an incorrect pronunciation of a tone can change the meaning of a word and in turn, the meaning of the phrase. In the case of xiè xie, however, the phrase is used so frequency that it is likely no matter how badly you mispronounce the tones, this expression of gratitude will be understood. The tones for xiè xie are 4th and no tone respectively. Chinese characters have meanings, and the character 谢 (xiè) means thanks, to thank. As the phrase Xiè xie. consists of two of the same characters, it literally means, "Thank(s), thank(s)." However, it is translated as "Thank you."

Xiè xie nǐ. (Thank you.), or the politer version Xiè xie nin. (Thank you.[formal]), are common variations of the phrase Xiè xie. (Thank you.). In both of these phrases xiè xie is followed by the word for you, nǐ (you) or the politer version nín (you, formal). The literal meaning of these phrases are closer to their English counterpart "Thank you." as both phrases includes the word you.

Another polite way to express one's gratitude is the phrase, Duō xiè. (Thank you so much.) which literally means "Many thanks." or "A lot of thanks." The components of this sentence are duō (many) and xiè (to thank). Literally many thanks, but translated as "Thank you very much." The tones for this phrase are the 1st tone, the flat tone, and 4th tone, the falling tone, respectively.

Finally there is a phrase that expresses one's utmost gratitude. This phrase is Wǒ hěn gǎn xiè. (Thank you so much.) which literally means "I very feel thanks." but is translated as "Thank you so much." This phrase is reserved for very special occasions, such as when someone does something extremely kind or particularly helpful.

As mentioned previously, the tones in Chinese are extremely important. In the phrase Wǒ hěn gǎn xiè. (Thank you so much.) The first three characters in this sentence are 3rd tone, the rising falling tone. When there are two consecutive 3rd tones, the first 3rd tone changes to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, while the second 3rd tone remains 3rd tone.

For example, the word wǒ (I, me) is 3rd tone; the word hěn (very) is also 3rd tone. However,when combined to form the phrase wǒ hěn, the first 3rd tone becomes a second tone.

Wǒ hěn -> Wó hěn

In the case of Wǒ hěn gǎn xiè. (Thank you so much.) there are 3 consecutive 3rd tones! While there are exceptions to the following rule and linguistics may take issue with this, for this particuliar point in your studies the following rule of thumb should suffice.

When there are 3 or more consecutive 3rd tones, change each 3rd tone preceding the final 3rd tone into a 2nd tone.

The phrase Wǒ hěn gǎn xiè. (Thank you so much.) is pronounced, Wó hén gǎn xiè. Notice that the first two 3rd tones are pronounced as 2nd tones.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
谢谢。	Xiè xie.	Thank you.
多谢。	Duō xiè.	Thanks a lot. Thank you very much.
我很感谢。	Wǒ hěn gǎn xiè.	I am very thankful. Thank you so much.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
谢	xiè	thanks, to thank
多	duō	many
我	wǒ	I, me
很	hěn	very, a lot
感	gǎn	to feel
您	nín	you (formal)

QUICK TIP

The gesture for thank you in Chinese is to cover one's right hand with the left, and raise them chest or head high while bowing one's head.

QUICK TIP 2

When in a dining situation, the waiter or waitress will often pour beverages for the patrons. A commonly used way of expressing gratitude for this action is to ,tap the table with one's index and middle fingers. This gesture, often repeated several times, and expresses the receiver's gratitude as well as that notion "that is enough of what is being poured."

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 2: You're Welcome!
不客气。Bú kèqì.

LESSON NOTES

Basic etiquette is a common characteristic shared by soceities throughout the world, and China is no exception. In fact, the Chinese are exceptionably hospitable, and phrases of gratitude and those related are used at an extremely high frequency. During your travels in China, it is more probable you will hear, rather than use, one of the phrases for "You're welcome."

In Chinese there are multiple ways to acknowledge and respond to an expression of gratitude. Again, as you will be using thank you repeatedly, there is a good chance you will come into contact with all three variations of "You're welcome." The following phrases are all frequently used, with usage depending on the speaker's style rather than other factors such as politeness level, etc.

Bú yòng xiè. (You're welcome.)

The phrase Bú yòng xiè. (You're welcome.) literally means "No need for thanks." or "No need for your thanks." Looking at the components of the sentence, bu is a negation marker. Yong means need/necessary, and xie is thank/thanks. This phrase can be translated literally into a colloquial English expression "No need for thanks." The tone for bù is the 4th tone; however, when bù is followed by another 4th tone, the tone changes from 4th tone, the falling tone, to the 2nd tone, the rising tone.

For example:

Bùhǎo (not good) is 4th tone and 2nd tone, and as the tone following bù in not 4th tone, bù remains 4th tone.

Bú yòng (no need/not necessary) is 4th tone and 2nd tone, and as the tone following bú is 4th tone, the tone changes from 4th tone, the falling tone, to the 2nd tone, the rising tone.

Bú kèqì. (You're welcome.)

The phrase Bú kèqì. literally means "Don't be polite." This phrase also begins with bu (the negation marker), which precedes kèqì (polite). Similiar to the phrase Bú yòng xiè. (You're welcome.), the tone for bú in this phrase changes from 4th tone, the falling tone, to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, as bù is followed by another 4th tone.

Méi shì. (It's nothing.)

Is the most casual way of expressing the notion of "You're welcome." The phrase Méi shì. literally means "It's nothing." Looking at the components of the sentence, méi is also a negation marker, while shì (thing) indicates something. When taken together in context, this phrase can be translated as "It doesn't matter." or "It's nothing."

In each of the phrases above the speaker is emphasizing that there is no need for thanks or gratitude. In fact, each phrase phrase is a negative sentence. This provides interesting insight into how the Chinese acknowledge and respond to an expression of gratitude, as the speaker is almost discouraging the thanking party showing appreciation. The negative commonality of these phrases provides interesting insight into how the Chinese perceive gratitude.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
不用谢。	Bú yòng xiè.	You're welcome. (lit. No need for thanks.)
不客气。	Bú kèqì.	You're welcome. (lit. No polite. or Don't be polite.)
没事。	Méi shì.	You're welcome. (lit. It's nothing.)

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
不	bù	negative prefix
用	yòng	to use
谢	xiè	thanks
客气	kèqì	polite
没	méi	negative prefix for verbs
事	shì	thing

QUICK TIP

Méi shì. (It's nothing.) in the Beijing dialect is Méi shìr. The frequent use of the noun suffix -r is distinctive characteristic of the Beijing dialect.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 3: This Please
请给我这个。Qǐng gěi wǒ zhège.

LESSON NOTES

China is a large and diverse country. In addition to the many places to see and visit, there are also many foods to try and goods to buy! However, in order to sample these new tastes and capitalize on some of the draw-dropping deals you are sure to come across, you must be able to ask for what you want. In China there are many street venders, shops, stores, restaurants and other locals where you can practice the phrase Qǐng gěi wǒ [something]. (Please give me [something].), which is commonly used when asking for something.

When asking for something in Chinese, you need to include the verb to give and

the pronoun for the person receiving the object. The phrase used to accomplish this

is Qǐng gěi wǒ [something]. (Please give me [something].), with the "something" desired positioned at the end of the sentence.

Compared to its English counterpart phrase,"[something] please." the phrase used to ask for something in Chinese is relatively complex as the receiver of the object, the indirect object, must be included. In English, the same request can be accomplished by identifying the "something" desired and fllowing it with "please."(If it is just one thing, an indefinite article would be needed too.) The difference is exemplified in the following example:

English: A Big Mac please.

Chinese: Qǐng gěi wǒ jùwábà. (Please give me a Big Mac.)

As it is highly unlikely that you will know the word for each "something" you come to desire, using the physical location of the "something" you want to communicate this is an extremely useful tactic. For something located nearby, you can refer to the thing with the word zhège （this). Therefore, to ask for something nearby you can use the phrase Qǐng gěi wǒ zhège. (This please.) For something further away, there is the phrase Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge. (Please give me that.)

The first three characters in this sentence are 3rd tone, the rising-falling tone. When there are two consectutive 3rd tones, the first 3rd tone changes to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, while the second 3rd tone remains 3rd tone. For example, the word nǐ (you) is 3rd tone, and the word hǎo is also 3rd tone. However, when combined to form the phrase Ní hǎo. (Hello.) The first 3rd tone becomes a 2nd tone.

In the case of Qǐng gěi wǒ! there are 3 consecutive 3rd tones! While there are exceptions to this rule and linguists may take issue with this, the following rule for encountering 3 or more consecutive 3rd tones should suffice.

When there are 3 or more consecutive 3rd tones, change each 3rd tone preceding the last one to a 2nd tone.

The phrase Qǐng gěi wǒ (Please give me) is pronounced Qíng géi wǒ. (Please give me), with the first two 3rd tones changing to 2nd tones.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
请给我。	Qǐng gěi wǒ.	Please give me.
请给我这个。	Qǐng gěi wǒ zhège.	Please give me this.
请给我那个。	Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge.	Please give me that.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
请	qǐng	please (do something)
给	gěi	to give
我	wǒ	I, me
这个	zhège	this
那个	nàge	that
巨无霸	jùwúbà	Big Mac

QUICK TIP

An extremely useful tactic for conveying what you want to a vender is using body language to identify the item you want while saying , Qǐng gěi wǒ. This should be more than enough clearly convey your intention.

QUICK TIP 2

When asking for something or shopping at locals where there are no price tags, be sure to haggle over the price! The quoted price is usually much higher than the price the vender would be willing to sell at.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 4: Basic Greetings
你好吗。Nǐ hǎo ma?

LESSON NOTES

In Chinese there are several basic greetings, with usage dependent on the time of day. However, there is one universal phrase that can be used regardless of the time of day and is more than appropriate for any social situation you may find yourself in. This universal phrase is Nǐ hǎo ma? (How are you?) The components of this phrase are nǐ (you), hǎo (good), and ma (a question-marker indicating that the sentence is a question), and this phrase literally means "You good?" The ma is sometimes omitted resulting in the greeting Nǐ hǎo. (Hello.)

The first two words in this sentence are 3rd tone, the rising-falling tone. When there are two consecutive 3rd tones, the first 3rd tone changes to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, while the second 3rd tone remains 3rd tone. The word nǐ (you) is 3rd tone, and the word hǎo is also 3rd tone. However, when combined to form the phrase Nǐ hǎo. (Hello.) The first 3rd tone becomes a 2nd tone, Nǐ hǎo.-> Ní hǎo., and the phrase is pronounced 2nd (Ní), 3rd tone (hǎo), no tone (ma).

To increase the politeness level of this statement for instances when you want to show the utmost respect, simply replace nǐ (you) with its formal counterpart nín (you, formal). Nín hǎo ma? (How are you? [formal]). This simple substitution increases the formality and politeness level of the sentence.

In Chinese the phrase Zǎo shang hǎo. (Good morning.) is used in the morning. Literally this phrase means "morning good," and is translated as Good morning. The components of this phrase are zǎo (morning), shang (up) and hǎo (good). Together zǎoshang means morning, and this is followed good (hǎo).

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
你好吗。	Nǐ hǎo ma?	How are you?
早上好。	Zǎo shang hǎo.	Good morning.
您好吗。	Nín hǎo ma?	How are you? (formal)

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
你	nǐ	you
好	hǎo	good
早上	zǎo shang	morning

QUICK TIP

The handshake is now a common form of greeting among most Chinese. In particular, when greeting a foreigner, most Chinese will offer a greeting with a handshake.

The traditional Chinese greeting is to cup one's hands, left over right, chest high with the elbows bent so that the knuckles are facing up, while bowing. In the past, the hands were raised even higher to show respect for someone of higher social status.

QUICK TIP 2

In China, the phrase Nǐ chī le ma? (Have you eaten?) can be used as a greeting. Chinese people are quite serious about food, and with good reason! Therefore, asking whether someone ate is like asking about their wellbeing.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 5: Goodbye
再见。Zài jiàn.

LESSON NOTES

In Chinese there are several parting greetings; however, there is one universal phrase that can be used for almost every situation. This universal phrase is Zài jiàn (See you again.). Literally this phrase means, "Again meet." The components that make up this phrase are zài (again) jiàn (meet), and both tones of the words in this sentence are 4th tone, the falling tone.The word jiàn (meet) appears in multiple parting greetings. For example, there is the parting phrase Míngtiān jiàn. (See you tomorrow.) In this phrase, the word zài (again) is replaced with míngtiān (tomorrow), forming the phrase, "See you tomorrow." Jiàn (to meet) doesn't change, and can be used as the basis for forming other parting phrases. For example, if you are meeting your friend at 4 o'clock you can say, Sì-diǎn jiàn. (See you at 4 o'clock.)In short, when used in a parting phrase, jiàn (meet) means "See you," but in Chinese this cannot stand alone. In order to complete the phrase, one must specify time when they will see each other again. If there is a specific time or a general idea of when the two parties will meet next, that time can be used and precedes jiàn (meet).

Specific time (4:30): Sì-diǎn jiàn. (See you at 4 o'clock.)

General time (tomorrow): Míngtiān jiàn. (See you tomorrow.)

If the time of the next meeting is not known, zài jiàn (See you again.) can be used.

In English, the position of first part of the phrase, "See you," is fixed, while what follows changes: "See you tomorrow." "See you tonight." "See you at 2." This is the opposite in Chinese, as the first part of the phrase changes, while the latter part, jiàn, is fixed.

In Chinese Wan an. (Good night!) is used as a final parting phrase at night or before going to bed. The words for evening (wan) and peaceful (an) are paired, meaning peaceful night. This is a common greeting before turning in for the night.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
再见。	Zài jiàn.	See you (later).
明天见。	Míngtiān jiàn.	See you tomorrow.
晚安。	Wǎn ān.	Good night.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
再	zài	again
见	jiàn	to meet
明天	míng tiān	tomorrow
晚	wǎn	evening
安	ān	content, calm

QUICK TIP

When saying goodbye, it would not be unusual for the host of a dinner, or get together, to make time to see you off. In fact, it would not be surprising if this include watching you ride off into the night, sunset, or any other applicable place one drives off into! In fact, Chinese etiquette dictates that it is the host's duty to accompany each guest to the door at the end of the festivities.

QUICK TIP 2

Gau la. is used when hanging up the phone.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 6: Where is the Bathroom?
洗手间在那儿。Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?

LESSON NOTES

For visiting foreigners, using the bathroom in China can be quite a memorable experience for many reasons. However, before using one, you have to find one. There is one linguistically hard way to do this, and one linguistically easy way to. We will look at the former first.

In Chinese, you can ask for the location of the bathroom with the following phrase Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr? (Where is the bathroom?). Literally this phrase means "Bathroom is where?", with the components of the sentence being xǐshǒujiān (bathroom) zài (exists) nǎr (where). As nǎr is an interrogative, the question-marker ma is not needed.

The first two tones of xǐshǒu are 3rd tones, the rising falling tone. When there are two consecutive 3rd tones, the first 3rd tone changes to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, while the second 3rd tone remains 3rd tone. Therefore, xǐshǒu is pronounced xíshǒu: 2nd tone, 3rd tone.

The following is the basic pattern for asking where something can be found (exists or is):

(something) zài nǎr? [Where is (something)?]

For example, when asking about the location of a bank (yínháng), the word for bank (yínháng) would be placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Yínháng zài nǎr? [Where is the bank?]

Notice how the latter parts of the sentence, zài nǎr, do not change.

The linguistically easy way to ask about the restroom in China is to say the letters "WC". These two letters stand for "Water Closet," which is widely understood in China as bathroom or restroom. By saying these two letters, not only will the reference to bathroom/restroom be understood, but the notion that the speaker is looking for one is also conveyed.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
洗手间在那儿。	Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?	Where is the bathroom?
WC在那儿。	WC zài nǎr?	Where is the bathroom?

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
洗手间	xǐshǒujiān	bathroom
在	zài	to exist
那儿	nǎr	where
WC	WC	water closet
银行	yínháng	bank

QUICK TIP

The sanitary standards of certain China bathrooms may be considered shocking by tourists from developed countries. Even at extremely good restaurants, it is not surprising if you find a less than tidy bathroom. So be sure to carry tissues and especially wet tissues wherever you go. You can pick some up at most convenience stores.

QUICK TIP 2

The two letters WC convey not only bathroom, but the fact that the speaker is looking for one. W-C are the two most important and useful letters when traveling in China.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 7: I Don't Understand
我不明白。Wǒ bù míngbaí.

LESSON NOTES

“I don’t understand” is going to be a very useful phrase because most of the time, maybe even almost 100% of the time, you won’t understand. The Chinese language sounds very different from English and in the beginning it will be very difficult to get your ear used to it. Michael himself spent a good month or two in China before he could really understand what the locals were saying. But don’t worry. If you keep it up, you’ll get it. Until then, practice the phrase Wǒ bù míngbaí. (I don’t understand.)

The first two parts of this phrase are words you have seen before: wǒ (I) and bù (no). The verb in this phrase is míngbaí, which means to understand. The phrase is literally “I no understand.” (I don’t understand.)

Most people don’t speak in isolated, four syllable phrases. In the lesson, we asked you to try to add Bù hǎo yìsī. (I’m sorry or I feel bad) onto the beginning of Wǒ bù míngbaí. This will make you sound more fluid and also more polite. (It is nice when a foreigner comes your country for them to apologize for not speaking your language.) Literally, Bù hǎo yìsī. means “no good meaning.” As was mentioned in a previous lesson, Bù hǎo yìsī. is used as an apology or to say excuse me. Together, these two phrases become: “I’m sorry. I don’t understand.”

"Wǒ bù huì shuō zhōngwén." means I don’t speak Chinese. Huì is a verb that indicates the ability to do something. (Huì also has other meanings, but we will try not to confuse you.) Generally huì refers to having knowledge or a certain skill. It is not used when the ability to do something is based on physical ability (for example a task that requires a certain amount of physical strength). You can place huì before another verb to say that you (or another subject) have the ability to do the second verb. In this phrase the second verb is shuō. Shuō means to say or to speak. Huì shuō means to be able to speak. In this sentence we combine the noun zhōngwén with the verb shuō. Zhōngwén means Chinese. Literally, this noun can be broken into two pieces: zhōng and wén. Zhōng means middle. In ancient times the Chinese believed their land was the center of the world, thus the Chinese word for China is Zhōngguó (middle kingdom). In Chinese the character zhōng is used to indicate all things Chinese. Wén means language, literature, or culture. Put together, Zhōngwén literally means “middle language” or the language of the middle kingdom. Thus we get the word Zhōngwén, which means the Chinese language. Zhōngwén can be attached onto the end of the verb shuō (to speak) to make the compound verb phrase “to speak Chinese.” Notice that this is just like English. You just add the word for a certain language after the verb “to speak.” This can be done in exactly the same way for any language

you want. (For example English, which is yīngyǔ, can be added onto the end of shuō for the verb phrase shuō yīngyǔ [to speak English.]) Adding huì, the phrase is huì shuō zhōngwén (to be able to speak Chinese).

We negate this phrase by adding the word bù (no) onto the beginning. (This is the same way we negate all verbs in the present tense except for one. More about that in a later lesson.) It is important that you pay attention to the way bù is pronounced. Normally bù is the fourth tone, the falling tone, but when it is put in front of another fourth tone (here huì) bù becomes bú, the second tone, the rising tone. The phrase then is bú huì shuō zhōngwén (not able to speak Chinese). Now we just add wǒ (I) onto the beginning (the subject comes first, just like in English) and you are all set. Wǒ bù huì shuō zhōngwén. (I can't speak Chinese.)

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
我不明白。	Wǒ bù míngbaí.	I don't understand.
不好意思。	Bù hǎo yìsī.	I'm sorry. I feel bad.
我不会说中文。	Wǒ bù huì shuō zhōngwén.	I can't speak Chinese.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
明白	míngbaí	To understand
会	huì	To be able
说	shuō	To speak
中文	Zhōngwén	Chinese (language)
汉语	Hànyǔ	Chinese (language)
国语	Guóyǔ	Chinese (language)

QUICK TIP

Sadly, China's most beautiful tourist destinations are swarming with peddlers. There probably will be one time where you see something being sold and think "Oh, hey, that's cool." Or maybe you say to yourself, "That's convenient, postcards right outside the Forbidden City." But you probably do not need 50 people selling postcards outside the Forbidden City. Nor do most people come to China to buy fake Rolexes. (Though they can be a neat souvenir for your relatives.) The Chinese believe in the hard sell. These peddlers generally ignore "I don't want any." At least the first few times you say it. Try today's phrases out on them. When they approach you, even if they're speaking English, say, "Bù hǎo yìsī. Wǒ bù míngbaí. Wǒ bù huì shuō zhōngwén." (I'm sorry. I don't understand. I can't speak Chinese.) Then walk away quickly, your head held high, possibly giggling to yourself a little. They will be too shocked to react. Hopefully, the peddler will just laugh a little and let you go.

QUICK TIP 2

Watch out, there are many different ways of saying the word Chinese (as in the language). In addition to zhōngwén, two common forms are Hànyǔ and Guóyǔ , but there are others out there and they can be different for different regions. So stay on your toes.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 8: Can You Speak English?
你会说英语马? Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?

LESSON NOTES

Today's lesson covers an important phrase you that will prove useful when searching for someone who can speak English, or another language. Using this phrase as opposed to speaking English at someone is important for many reasons. For one, if the party you're speaking to doesn't understand English, at least they'll be able to understand what you're asking. Furthermore, if they cannot speak English, they may be able to help you find someone who does. And finally, it shows a lot of respect to show that you took the effort to learn even a little bit of the language, and for these reasons and many more, we're going to cover this phrase.

In Chinese, the following phrase is used to ask if the listening party can speak English: Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma. (Can you speak English ?). Looking that this question by component, nǐ , the pronoun for you, is the first word in the sentence. This is followed by the auxiliary verb huì (can) and the verb shuō (to speak). In our example this is followed by yīngyǔ (English)."Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ" literally means "You can speak English." This is a statement, and can be used accordingly. However, if we attach the question-marker ma, this statement becomes a question. This is illustrated in the following example:

Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ. - You can speak English.

Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma? - Can you speak English?

To ask someone if they can speak a different language, simply replace yīngyǔ with the Chinese word for the language you would to ask about. For example, if you would like to ask, "Can you speak French?"

Nǐ huì shuō fǎyǔ ma? (Can you speak French?)

Notice the common word, yǔ (to speak), shared by both Chinese words for French and English. In fact, the yǔ (to speak) will appear as part of a word for languages. For example English is yīngyǔ, French is fǎyǔ, Chinese can be Hànyǔ.

The following in an excerpt from a previous lesson on the verb huì (to be able) . Huì is a verb that indicates the ability to do something. (Huì also has other meanings, but we will try not to confuse you.) Generally huì refers to having knowledge or a certain skill. It is not used when the ability to do something is based on physical ability (for example a task that requires a certain amount of physical strength). You can place huì before another verb to say that you (or another subject) have the ability to do the second verb. In this phrase the second verb is shuō. Shuō means to say or to speak. Huì shuō means to be able to speak. In this sentence we combine

the noun yīngyǔ with the verb shuō. Yīngyǔ means English. Literally, this noun can be broken into two pieces: yīng and yǔ. Yīng means English. Yǔ means language, words, or speech. Put together, yīngyǔ literally means “English language.” or the language of the middle kingdom. Thus we get the word Zhōngwén, which means the Chinese language. Zhōngwén can be attached onto the end of the verb shuō (to speak) to make the compound verb phrase “to speak Chinese.”

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
你会说英语马。	Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma.	Can you speak English?

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
你	nǐ	you
会	huì	can, be possible
说	shuō	to say
英语	yīngyǔ	English
马	ma	question marker

QUICK TIP

Other languages:

Japanese - Rìyǔ (日语)

German - Déyǔ (德语)

Korean - Hányǔ (韩语)

Italian - Yìdàlìyǔ (意大利语)

Spanish - Xībānyáyǔ (西班牙语)

Arabic - Alābóyǔ (阿拉伯语)

Russian - Eluósīyǔ (俄罗斯语)

Hindi - Yìndùyǔ (印度语)

QUICK TIP 2

In Chinese there are usually two ways to refer to a language. For example, Yīngyǔ (English) and Yīngwén (English). The pattern including yǔ (to speak) is commonly used when referring to the spoken language; whereas, wén (language, literature, or culture) is can be used to refer to spoken language and literature. However, they are often used interchangeably.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 9: Please Say it Once Again
请再说一遍。Qǐng zài shuō yībiàn.

LESSON NOTES

Here at SurvivalPhrases.com we believe that there is a tremendous amount of Chinese you can learn from speakers of the language wherever you are located geographically. Therefore, we do our best to provide you with the tools to allow you to turn everyday and every encounters into a learning opportunity. Today's lesson is one of the first steps in that process.

In Chinese, the following phrase is used to ask the speaking party to repeat what was said: Qǐng zài shuō yībiàn. (Please say it again.) Chinese people speak fast. They use words you haven't studied before. They don't necessarily use the simplest grammar. All this can make interactions with Chinese people very frustrating for the beginner. The best thing is to remember to be patient. Every time you talk to a Chinese person you are improving. If you're not actually learning things that you can write down later, at least you're getting your brain accustomed to how Chinese people speak, you are working on one of the most important parts of any language: an unconscious feeling for that language. So be patient, and when you don't understand, say "Qǐng zài shuō yībiàn."

Looking that this question by component, qǐng means please. It can be used almost exactly as the English "please" except that it always comes at the beginning of the sentence. (Unlike in English where you can add "please" onto the end of a request.) Qǐng must be either the first word in a sentence or directly follow the subject of the sentence. In this phrase there is no subject (the subject, "you," is implied) so qǐng is the first word.

The next word, zài means again. Zài is always placed before the verb in a sentence. The verb in this phrase is shuō which means "to say." So far our phrase is: Qǐng zài shuō. This means "Please say again." You could get by just saying this; however, Chinese people almost always add yībiàn. Yī means "one," and biàn is a measure word for a number of times. We will cover the way measure words are used in another lesson. For now, it's just fine to remember biàn is translated as "time(s)." Thus yībiàn is "one time." Added onto the end of the phrase, the whole phrase becomes "Qǐng zài shuō yībiàn." ("Please say again one time.") In English we would want to add the object "it" into this sentence to make it "Please sayt again one time." but in Chinese this object is unnecessary and actually would hurt the flow of the sentence. Objects and subjects in Chinese are often left out when their meaning can be inferred from context. So, again, the whole phrase is "Qǐng zài shuō yībiàn." This is translated as "Please say it again one time."

Unfortunately, getting someone to repeat themselves doesn't guarantee you'll understand them the second time. (Or the third, or fourth time, for that matter. Did we mention how it's important to be patient?) One key to understanding people is getting them to speak slower. "Qǐng shuō

màn yīdiǎn." means "A little slower, please." Qǐng, again, means please. Màn means slow. Yīdian means a little. Literally, the phrase would be "Please a little slow." and this is kind of what it means. "Màn yīdiǎn" does mean "a little slow," but often yīdiǎn attached to an adjective implies the meaning "more" of a certain adjective. Thus here màn yīdiǎn means "a little slower." If someone were to say they wish they were gāo yīdiǎn, they are not saying they wish they were "a little tall" (the speaker could already be very tall), they are saying they wish they were "a little taller." (Gāo means tall or high.) Now we can understand how our phrase, "Qǐng shuō màn yīdiǎn." comes to mean "A little slower, please."

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
请再说一遍。	Qǐng zài shuō yībiàn.	Please say it again.
请说慢一点。	Qǐng shuō màn yīdiǎn.	Please say it a little slower.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
请	qǐng	please
再	zài	again
说	shuō	to say
一遍	yībiàn	once, one time
慢	màn	slowly, slow
一点	yīdiǎn	a little

QUICK TIP

In Chinese there are two ways of saying "again." Zài means again, but it refers to events that are going to happen in the future. Thus in our phrase we used zài. The person you are talking to is going to repeat themselves after you ask. Events that have happened again in the past are given the word yòu. Yòu also means "again," but it is only for the past. "Yòu shuō le yībiàn" means "(He/she/you) said it again." Notice how this sentence is in the past tense. (Please allow us to ignore "le" for now. That must be saved for another time. We just wanted to point out an interesting feature of the Chinese language. This is just a Quick Tip after all.)

QUICK TIP 2

Michael lied in the lesson. He said he learned most of his Chinese in China from Chinese people. That may be true, but when he first got to China he didn't understand anything the Chinese people were saying. That made it very hard to have Chinese friends. So Michael cheated. He made friends with Koreans and Japanese people. He spent a lot of his first few months in China hanging out with these fellow foreigners. They didn't speak English, so he was forced to speak Chinese with them. Their Chinese wasn't great, but this taught Michael to use Chinese as a form of communication and not just see it as a hobby. It also helped that they only used basic words and tended to speak more slowly. The SurvivalPhrases.com team encourages you to cheat. Cheating is only wrong in professional sports and gambling. In language it doesn't matter how

you get fluent, only that you do it. So go look for some non-English speakers who can practice Chinese with you at your level. In this case, we really mean it; you'll be surprised how far your little Chinese will go.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 10: Apologies
对不起。Duì bùqǐ.

LESSON NOTES

Many foreigners coming to China speak no Chinese at all. (Well, besides a garbled "Nǐ hǎo ma?") Chinese people have come to expect this from foreigners on the street. Most Chinese people will not say anything to you if they are trying to get past you or would like you to move out of the way. Some wave their hands to indicate they'd like you to move, some lower their head and just try to push through. Some Chinese people will even say "I'm sorry." or "Excuse me." in English when squeezing past you on a crowded bus. This lesson is your chance to shock complete strangers. Saying "Sorry." or "Excuse me." in Chinese ("Duì bùqǐ." or "Bùhǎo yìsī.") will make people do a double-take as you pass. Saying "Méi wèn tí." ("No problem.") in response to their English "I'm sorry." will make their eyes go wide. It may even elicit a stunned "Your Chinese is really good." To which you can respond with the "Xièxiè." we have already learned. Other people don't have to know that you've just started learning. (Chinese people in general have very low expectations for foreigners' Chinese levels, especially when they are taken by surprise in public. Often a couple words in understandable Chinese are enough to get a "Your Chinese is very good.")"Duì bùqǐ." means "I'm sorry." or "Excuse me." "Bùhǎo yìsī." can be broken into three separate words: bù (no) hǎo (good) yìsī (meaning). Altogether this would be "No good meaning." "Bùhǎo yìsī." actually means something more like "I feel bad." and can also be used as "I'm sorry." or "Excuse me." Teaching a language we feel that we have a responsibility to give you ways to distinguish between words that have very similar meanings. In the lesson we tried to do this. The truth is, the difference is miniscule. If you want to, you can use the two words interchangeably. If you must distinguish between them, the difference is that "Duì buqǐ." is more often used as an apology, whereas "Bùhǎo yìsī." more often is used the way English speakers use "Excuse me." However, just like in English where "I'm sorry." and "Excuse me." can often be used in the same situations, "Bùhǎo yìsī." and "Duì bùqǐ." can always be switched out for one another. Let's look at some examples:

You're riding the subway. You can't remember the name of the station that you're supposed to get off at. You pull out your little notebook where you've written down the name of the station. While you're still flipping through your book, the subway pulls into the next station and the brakes come on. The sudden decrease in speed causes you to lose you balance a little. You take a couple steps to your right, trying to regain your balance, but your foot lands squarely on the leather shoe of a man sitting in the seats in front of you. He looks up at you surprised, sees you're a foreigner, and immediately gives up any hope of communication. In this case, both forms are equally acceptable. For many people "Duì bùqǐ." might be more natural because it is used a little more often as an apology, but "Bùhǎo yìsī." would also be totally fine. Both will probably

increase the man's surprise. Most likely he will say nothing and just wave his hand, indicating that it's no problem. Don't feel too bad if he then brushes off his shoe, it's probably been stepped on at least once today.

Now, let's take the same situation, in the subway, trying to figure out where to get off, and say you want ask the person next to you what the next stop is. (We'll have to leave the actual question "What's the next stop?" to a later lesson.) You gently tap the woman next to you on the shoulder. Here many people would say "Bùhǎo yìsī." because it is probably closer to "Excuse me." It means you feel bad for disturbing the other person. However, "Duì bùqǐ." would also be perfectly fine. It would be like saying "Sorry, but..." Hopefully, these two examples help demonstrate the difference between "Duì bùqǐ." and "Bùhǎo yìsī." Most importantly, they should show just how small this difference is.

So how do you respond when someone says to you "I'm sorry." Probably the most common response is a very casual "Méi wèntí." This literally means "no problem." Méi means no. (It indicates the absence of something, in this case the absence of a problem. The difference between méi and bù is very important, but we will have to save that for another lesson. For now, always translating "no" as bù unless given a specific example is a safe bet.) "Wèntí" means "problem" or "question." So, together we get "no problem." Using "Méi wèntí." is a snap. Just drop it whenever someone says "Duì bùqǐ." or "Bùhǎo yìsī." It's bound to get a good reaction.

"Méi wèntí." can also be used in the other way that the English "No problem." is used. It can be used to mean "Okay." If some asks you to do something, or if you want to do something, you can respond "Méi wèntí." "No problem."

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
对不起。	Duì bùqǐ.	I am sorry. Excuse me.
不好意思。	Bùhǎo yìsī.	I am sorry. Lit. to feel embarassed
没问题。	Méi wèntí.	No problem.
劳驾。	Láojià.	Excuse me.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
不	bù	no
好	hǎo	good
意思	yìsī.	meaning
问题	wèntí	problem
事	shì	business, matter

QUICK TIP

Another way to respond to "Bùhǎo yìsī." or "Duì bùqǐ." is "Méi shì." "Méi" means "no," and "shì" can mean "business," "affair," "matter," or "trouble." So "Méi shì." can be translated as "No trouble." "Méi shì." can be used just the same as "Méi wèntí." and is probably equally common. "Méi shì." also has one advantage over "Méi shì." it gives you a chance to toy with a Beijing accent.

Accents in China range widely. Beijing Chinese is often considered the most standard Chinese, and Chinese people with strong accents from other places often seem to think of themselves as having somewhat defective Mandarin. This is not to say that everyone thinks the Beijing accent sounds nice. There is a big rivalry between Shanghai and Beijing and thus Shanghai people may not like the Beijing accent very much at all. Many Chinese people think Beijingers are somewhat full of themselves and haughty about being from the capital; but there is still a certain degree to which Beijing Chinese is respected throughout China. Lots of people will think it's great fun if you come out sporting a Beijing accent.

One part of the Beijing accent is a tendency to add "er" onto the end of all sorts of words. Thus "Méi shì." is pronounced "Méi shìr." Try it a couple times. This one is very easy and comes out very naturally. Many other words also can get an "er" at the end, but not all words. There is no real rule for this, it just requires experience, so you might want to hold off before you just start adding "er" to everything.

QUICK TIP 2

You might find the word "láojià" when you look up "excuse me" in a dictionary or a beginner's Chinese book. It's true this word does mean "excuse me," it's used to clear the way when navigating a crowd, but no one ever uses it. Michael reports hearing it one time, in a supermarket when a stocker was trying to get through a group of people while pushing a cart full of yoghurt. Michael was shocked because he had seen that word in books before, but never actually heard anyone use it. You're welcome to say "láojià" if you want, just know that nobody else uses it.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 11: Business Greetings - Welcome!
欢迎光临。Huānyíng guānglín!

LESSON NOTES

Chinese business etiquette dictactes that staff of a business establishment are to greet a patron when they enter the place of business. The phrase used to accomplish this Huānyíng guānglín! (There is no English equivalent, but is used to welcome customers to a place of business.). This phrase literally means happy (huān) welcome (yíng) light (guāng) draw near (lín). Roughly translated this phrase means, "Happily welcoming the approaching light." The following are a few different ways to help you remember the meaning of the phrase.

1) When someone opens the door, more light pours in.

2) They are welcoming the approach of you glowing brillance.

3) They are happily welcoming the approach of your shining money, that the shopkeeper would like to see you spend.

4) "We welcome the approach of your brilliance."

In English there is no direct equivalent in English, so this custom, of hearing one, many or the entire staff shouting this phrase as you enter the store, may take some getting used to. As for proper protocl upon hearing this phrase, you are not required to respond, but if you like you could acknowledge the speakers presence by saying Nǐ hǎo. (Hello.)

When leaving an establishment the staff of the establihment will say Huānyíng zàilái.(Please come again.) Literally welcome (huānyíng) again come (zàilái). Even if you don't purchase anything, this phrase is said as you leave. When exiting the place of business, one may also hear the expression Xiè xie guānglín! (Thank you for coming.)

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
欢迎光临。	Huānyíng guānglín!	Welcome! (Simplified Chinese)
歡迎光臨。	Huānyíng guānglín!	Welcome! (Traditional Chinese)
欢迎再来。	Huānyíng zàilái.	Thank you come again.
谢谢光临。	Xiè xie guānglín!	Thank you for coming!

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
欢迎	huānyíng	to welcom
光临	guānglín	to be present
再来	zàilái	to come again

QUICK TIP

The simplified characters for this phrase are common in mainland China.

欢迎光临。 Huānyíng guānglín!(Simplified)

The tradional characters, used in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and by some overseas Chinese communities, for this phrase are a bit different.

歡迎光臨。 Huānyíng guānglín! (Traditional)

QUICK TIP 2

It is perfectly fine not to respond to this when entering a business establishment. Just going about your business is how most patrons react to this.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 12: Restaurant 1 - How Many People?
几个人？Jǐ ge rén？

LESSON NOTES

Yes, today's lesson is ostensibly about restaurants, but really it's just a good way to lead into a discussion of measure words. Why was it important to lead into the discussion of measure words, you ask? Why couldn't we just have a lesson about measure words and call it that? The answer is that Michael doesn't like explaining difficult things. In order to get him to the studio, the bosses here needed to concoct a plausible lesson that he would be teaching that would require measure words. They didn't mention measure words, but once he was recording, going through the scenario, and explaining the phrase, he was caught. Sometimes he's like a little bunny rabbit, so eager for the carrot that he doesn't notice the trap around it.

Today's lesson introduced the phrase Jǐ ge rén? (How many people?) This is the first question you will be asked upon entering a restaurant. It literally means "How many people?" Thus when the wait staff asks you this, they are asking "How many people in your party?" Jǐ means "how many," and rén means "people." In answer to this question you can just say a number followed by ge rén or you could just say a number and ge. For example, you might say "Sān ge." ("Three.) or Qī ge rén." ("Seven people.") Chinese people like to keep their speech simple, so they often leave off rén. The wait staff will understand you are talking about people even if you don't say rén because of the context.

So, "ge"... What is "ge?" How is it used? "Ge" is a part of speech called a measure word. Measure words are used in Chinese when counting things; they go between the number and the noun. Thus "three people" is "sān ge rén." (Number + measure word + noun.) In Chinese, you cannot talk about a number of something without following the number with a measure word. Even if you just want to say "Three." in response to "Jǐ ge rén?" you still have to use a measure word. You say, "Sān ge." There is no noun, but you still need to say a measure because you are still talking about a noun even though you have omitted it for simplicity. It's just the way Chinese works. This is made more complicated by the fact that there are different measure words for different kinds of nouns. As Michael said, there are measure words for long, thin things (like streets and pants), for wide, flat things (like paper and CDs), for vehicles (like cars and bikes), for little, round things (like pearls and seeds), and many, many other categories. This makes for a whole lot of vocabulary that you have to learn if you want to count nouns. Or you can cheat. You can take the easy way out and just use "ge." "Ge" is the knight in shining armor of measure words. It is an all-purpose measure word that can be used with any noun. Technically, when talking about a number of a certain noun you should use the appropriate measure word. (Although some nouns don't have any measure word designated to them, and therefore always use "ge.") But, being a beginner, no one will think twice if you always use "ge." Doing this won't make you sound exactly like a Chinese person, but it shouldn't be a major block to people

understanding you. In the lessons here at SurvivalPhrases.com we will occasionally introduce measure words when then are necessary, but most of the time we will just use "ge." After you get a feeling for Chinese you can start using specific measure words, but, for now, this will be fine.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
几个人？	Jǐ ge rén?	How many people?
三个。	Sān ge.	Three.
一个人。	Yī ge rén.	One person.
几位？	Jǐ wei4?	How many customers?
七	Qī wei4.	Seven customers.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
几	jǐ	how many (for small numbers)
个	ge	all purpose measure word
人	rén	person
位	wei4	polite measure word for customers or guests

QUICK TIP

Often when you go into a restaurant the wait staff will ask you "Jǐ wèi?" "Wèi" is a polite measure word for guests or customers. Thus "Jǐ wèi?" means "How many customers?" It is a polite way of asking the question from today's lesson. To this you can respond exactly as you would have responded to "Jǐ ge rén?" You can say "Sān ge." or "Qī ge rén." Or you can use the form that they used, and respond "Sān wèi." ("Three customers.") or "Qī wèi." ("Seven customers.") Note that "wèi" is a measure word for customers and guests, not people. Thus "wèi" would never be followed by "ren2." However, responding "Qī wèi." tells them automatically that you are talking about customers even though neither of you have used the word "customer." This is because "wèi" is specific to customers and guests. Using "ge" never gives anyone any extra clue as to what you are talking about because "ge" can used for anything. Using either response is okay, both responses are equally polite. The difference in politeness only exists in the question: "Jǐ wèi?" is more polite and more formal than "Jǐ ge rén?"

QUICK TIP 2

In smaller and less upscale restaurants, if it is crowded, it is not uncommon for customers of different parties to be seated together when there are no other seats. If you and a friend come into a crowded little restaurant during the lunch rush, do not be surprised if the staff asks you to sit at a table across from two Chinese men busily scarfing down noodles. This is not to say that the Chinese like sitting with people they don't know. If you are already eating you will often

see Chinese people come in and survey the tables looking for a free table. It is only when there are no other options that they will sit at a table with people they don't know. This is done out of necessity, not preference.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 13: Restaurant 2 - Waiter!
服务员！Fúwù yuán!

LESSON NOTES

Chinese cuisine is renowned throughout the world, so when you finally make it to China, your stomach will have a lot work to do. Chinese restaurants vary in their level of service. Sometimes you will have to be a bit assertive to get the waiter or waitress' attention, other times you will have to yell.

To get the attention of an individual working in a restaurant you say "Fúwù yuán." This means "waiter" or "waitress." Literally "fúwù" means "service" and "yuán" means "staff." Start out by raising your hand and saying this phrase at a normal speaking volume in the direction of the nearest available staff member. Raise the volume each time you have to say it. It is not uncommon for the Chinese to yell "Fúwù yuán!" across a room at the top of their lungs, and it is not necessarily bad manners; it all depends on how you pull it off. If you try lower volumes originally and then gradually move up to a yell, no one will blame you. It's just mean to bark at the staff, especially if the restaurant is quiet; but if you have to cry out over the din of a hundred other diners, the wait staff will almost certainly sympathize. The struggling, but persevering foreigner is a cute character to play. Smiling is also a great touch. Those of us who have worked in the service industry will tell you: there is nothing better than a smiling customer, and nothing worse than a scowling customer.

Before you call the staff over, you should probably decide what you want to eat. Most the time, actually, a staff member will stand by your table and wait for your order as soon as you sit down. Often Chinese people come to a certain restaurant craving a certain dish, and thus ordering is easy. Even if they don't know what they want, the Chinese often display amazing ordering skills. They can have their the whole party's dinner decided in under two minutes. You should not feel pressured by this. You are in China only for a short time. Savor it.

Chinese menus are one of the many wonders of China. Some of these menus can include up to several hundred items to select from. Chinese people eating in a place they are unfamiliar with are often baffled as to what to eat. There will often be dishes on the menu which your Chinese friends have never seen before. Ordering is thus doubly challenging if you are doing it on your own. Some menus in nicer restaurants, especially near tourist areas or areas with lots of foreign customers, will have English. This is usually of great assistance, though the English names for dishes are sometimes more hilarious than helpful. (One Chinese menu had asterisks next to some of the dishes. At the bottom of the page it stated that an asterisk denotes "handicapped accessible." Then there's the wonderful "dreaded veal cutlet" and the always tasty "cold shredded children and sea blubber." Of course we Westerners aren't always any better. Now serving in a US diner: "French creeps."*) The best is when a restaurant has a menu with

pictures. This actually occurs quite often, usually in mid-grade to upscale restaurants. When you see something you like, call a member of the staff with a loud "Fúwù yuán!" (Unless they are already standing next to your table, waiting.) Once the staff member is ready, you can simply point at the dish you want and say, "Zhège." "Zhège." means "This." Pointing and saying "Zhège." should be enough for the staff to understand you. They will say the name of the dish out loud as they write it down. To this you can respond by nodding your head, smiling, and maybe even saying "Zhège." again.

The phrase "Wǒ yāo zhège." （"I want this.") is closer to what a Chinese person would say. The word order here is the same as in English: "wǒ" ("I") "yāo" ("want") "zhège" ("this"). You can also modify this phrase to express desire for specific objects. Just replace "zhège" with any noun to say that you want that noun. Let's say you would like some coke. Just say "Wǒ yāo zhège." ("Kělè" means "cola.") You can do this for any other noun you can think of, so now all you need is a dictionary.

People in many parts of China grow up eating spicy food. Everything they ate since they were little was spicy. (Other areas, Shanghai and the regions surrounding it, for example, do not specialize in spicy cuisine, and people from those areas are likely not to like spicy food much.) Many of us Westerners are not used to spicy foods. For these people, eating at a restaurant in China is like playing Russian Roulette. Even those of us who love spicy food may not want it every meal. If you are worried about the spiciness of a certain dish, just point to it and ask, "Hěn là ma?" This means "Is it spicy?" "Hěn" means "very." "Là" means "spicy." "Ma" is a particle that indicates that a sentence is a question. Literally, this phrase is: "Very spicy?" If the waiter/waitress says "Bù. Bù là." ("No. It's not spicy.") then you're good to go.

*Taken from Charlie Croker's Lost in Translation.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
服务员！	Fúwù yuán!	Waiter! Waitress!
这个（给我）。	Zhège (géi wǒ).	This (please).
我要这个。	Wǒ yāo zhège.	I want this.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
服务员	Fúwùyuán	waiter/waitress
服务	Fúwù	to servce/service
员	yuán	person, employee
这个	zhège	this
我	Wǒ	I, me
要	yāo	demand, want

QUICK TIP

Another way you can respond to the waiter/waitress when they repeat your order is to nod once and say a sharp "uhn." Saying a quick, sharp "uhn" in China is the equivalent of saying yes. This is not really a word, though it can be written as a character, it is more like a sound of agreement, like the English "uh-huh." The Chinese "uhn" is often accompanied by a nod. In English we often feel uncomfortable not using some words or a full sentence to answer a question. Even "uh-huh" is not very polite and often feels incomplete. The Chinese, however, often affirmatively answer questions by just saying "uhn" once and nodding. Remember, this is a sharp, quick syllable and you just say it once. When you get the hang of this sound, it will make it a lot easier to answer Chinese questions.

QUICK TIP 2

There is no tipping in Chinese restaurants. Never tip in a Chinese restaurant. A few of the nicest and most established restaurants will add a gratuity onto your check, but you are never, ever expected to leave money for the wait staff. The wait staff will find it confusing and probably very embarrassing if you try to give them money. (This goes for cab drivers, too.)

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 14: Restaurant 3 - Getting the Bill
买单! Mǎidān!

LESSON NOTES

Getting the check in a restaurant and the way people behave around paying always gives you insight into a country's culture. China is no different. Let's start with how you get the check when you're by yourself, then we'll talk about what to do if you're with other people.

First, obviously, you have to get the staff's attention. This is just like ordering, you raise your hand and your voice and say, "Fúwù yuán!" (This is from the last lesson. It means "Waiter!" or "Waitress!") Once you've called the staff, you can either wait for them to come over to the table or you can yell, "Mǎidān!" from where you are. "Mǎidān" literally means "buy form." ("Mǎi" means "to buy" and "dān" means "form.") This is how you say "the check" in Chinese. ("Jiézhàng" is another common way to say "check" in Chinese. We will be using "mǎidān" in the lessons, but you can use either.) It is perfectly alright to yell "Mǎidān!" at the same volume that you yelled "Fúwù yuán!" Yelling it out before they come to your table saves the wait staff a trip. When the restaurant is especially busy, this saved time is very helpful. However, it's not appropriate to just start yelling in a very quiet or fancy restaurant. (Fancy and quiet always go together.) In this case, just wait for the staff to come over and say, "Mǎidān." in a normal tone.

Paying is just a matter of counting money if you're by yourself. But if you're out with Chinese people it can become a little more complicated. As Michael said, Chinese people never split the check. There is almost always someone who pays the whole bill. (This is actually changing. Amongst young people it is becoming more and more common to split things, especially with close friends. Many young people, however, still take turns treating each other and amongst older people it is almost unheard of to split the check.) In Chinese, "to pay for someone" is "qǐng." This is the same word as "please." If someone wants to pay for you, they will say "Wǒ qǐng nǐ." (Literally "I pay for you.") Note that because there are three third tones in a row the second one becomes a second tone to break things up and make the phrase easier to say. The phrase is thus pronounced: "Wǒ qǐng nǐ." (For simplicity's sake we use this rule for breaking third tones up with second tones. With two third tones, the first character becomes a second tone. With three third tones, the second character becomes a second tone. With four third tones, the first and third characters become second tones, and so on. In reality, there is no such rule. How you break up third tones has to do with a feeling for which characters should be separated, but we feel it would be helpful for our listeners, as beginners, to have a rule of thumb.)

Who pays for the meal depends a lot on the situation. If you are invited out by someone it is very common for them to pay for the meal. We are not talking about your friend calling you up, asking what you're doing, and then asking if you want to get dinner together. We are talking about much more formal dinner plans made in advance where someone is certainly hosting an event. In this

case you should expect that they will pay and not make a fuss as they discreetly deal with the check. You might even use the second phrase from today's lesson if you're in a good mood. (We haven't introduced that phrase yet, but we will be doing so presently.) Business dinners also run like this. There is always someone hosting and they will be picking up the bill. Everyone knows that from the beginning. Being in a group of people where there is no clear host makes things a little more complicated. If you go out with friends (possibly new friends you have just met) or even just one friend, they will often want to pay for your meal. They will claim that it is Chinese custom. They will say that you are a guest in their country. The truth is, they would probably do this with other Chinese people. It is not so much a matter of you being a guest (though that feeling may contribute) as it is them buying face. It is considered honorable for someone to pay for someone else's meal. It makes them feel like they are your benefactor. Thus Chinese people often battle over who gets to pay for the meal. Many Chinese men refuse to let women pay for their meal (even if the man happens to be unemployed at the moment and the woman has a very good job). People who make a fraction of what you earn will insist on paying for you. Though you may feel somewhat embarrassed (Westerners also have certain feelings about the respectableness of paying for a meal), we suggest you let Chinese people who want to pay for you do so. Especially with the "You are a guest in my country." card at their disposal, this is a war you are unlikely to win. And even if you do force them to let you pay, you often do so at the cost of embarrassing them at least a little. A common Chinese way to respond to someone insisting on paying for you is to say "Xià yīcì wǒ qǐng nǐ." ("Next time I'll pay for you.") It is hard to say how often the person saying this does actually buy the other person a meal, but it sounds good, and it is a nice compromise that spares everyone's feelings. (Friends actually do often take turns paying for each other, though this doesn't always prevent squabbles. People's memories get foggy and they insist that it is their turn to pay, or they try to bring in mitigating circumstances that will allow them to pay again.) We can break this phrase into halves. The second half is "wǒ qǐng nǐ" which we just went over and we know means "I pay for you." (Remember to change the tone on "qǐng.") The first half, "xià yīcì," means "next one time." "Xià" can mean "down" or "next," "yī" means "one," and "cì " is a measure word for a number of times. Saying "yīcì" means "one time." Thus "xià yīcì " means "next one time" or just "next time." Putting the two halves together, the phrase is "Xià yīcì wǒ qǐng nǐ." ("Next time I'll pay for you.") Note that you do not need to conjugate the verb "qǐng" even though the action is now in the future. The verb stays the same and people figure out from the context that you are talking about the future. The Chinese language is often like this, relying on context instead of grammar to communicate meaning.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
买单!	Mǎidān!	Check!
下一次我请你。	Xià yīcì wǒ qǐng nǐ.	Next time I'll pay for you.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
买单	mǎidān	bill, check
请	qǐng	to treat, to pay for (someone), please
下	xià	down, next

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
次	cì	measure word for number of times
发票	fāpiào	receipt
结帐	jiézhàng	check

QUICK TIP

When offering an object such as a gift or drink to someone, as well as when receiving something from someone, it is polite to use both hands.

At hosted meals, it is the responsibility of the host, not the wait staff, to see that the guests' drinking glasses are refilled. It is also mandatory in Chinese etiquette for the host to accompany each guest to the door when a meal or party ends. Ranking guests are normally accompanied all the way to their automobiles or to a taxi. The host waits until they drive away before going back inside.

It is Chinese etiquette to say no when offered a drink, a meal, a gift, or a favor. It is up to you, the host, to politely persist. Your guests expect you to insist, and only then will they take the offered item. When you are the guest you will find it almost impossible to turn down anything that is offered. Because they are used to Chinese custom, where people turn things down out of politeness, the Chinese are trained to keep offering and insisting until the recipient submits. This can be frustrating when you really don't want the thing being offered. If there is a specific reason why you don't want it (you don't smoke cigarettes, maybe, or you don't eat meat) we suggest that you tell them the reason straight away. Though many Chinese may be perplexed by the reason you give (almost all Chinese men smoke cigarettes at least sometimes, and most of the vegetarians in China are vegetarians because they are practicing Buddhists, almost no one is a vegetarian just because they don't like meat) if you repeat yourself forcefully a few times they will get the idea. If there is no specific reason that you don't want to accept what is offered (maybe the food just looks kind of weird) then the best route is probably to accept the offering out of politeness and then direct their attention elsewhere.

QUICK TIP 2

When you pay for a meal, be sure to ask for the scratch off receipts. A lot of the bigger restaurants in China have receipts with little silver boxes that you can scratch off. If you get lucky, scratching away the box will reveal a denomination of money that you have just won. Most of the time, however, they will just say "Xièxiè." ("Thank you.") That means you don't get anything. For the Chinese this is an added pleasure at the end of the meal and a great way to finish the party. So make sure to say to your waiter/waitress, "Fāpiào." ("Receipt.")

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 15: Restaurant - Paying in Plastic
可以用信用卡吗？Kěyǐ yòng xìnyòngkǎ ma?

LESSON NOTES

Westerners love plastic. The Chinese love cold, hard cash. There is no substitute for it. Almost all transactions in China are done in cash. People buy dinner with cash. They buy clothes with cash. They pay their rent in cash. It is only recently that loans are starting to become available to most people. Many Chinese are still wary of taking out a loan, and it's not exactly easy to get one. (It wasn't until the last twenty years that cars and houses became available on the market. Before there was nothing big to purchase. There was no reason to get a loan.) Many Chinese people still do not really trust money that they can't hold in their hands. It is only the most fashionable (read: the rich and the young) who have begun to use credit cards. Mom-and-pop places certainly won't take your credit card. But, in big cities, the number of bigger restaurants and shopping centers that will take credit cards is growing rapidly.

So, if you like using your card, why not give it a try? Just make sure you bring enough cash, too. To ask about credit cards, just say, "Kěyǐ yòng xìnyòngkǎ ma?" ("Can I use a credit card?") "Kěyǐ" means "can," or "may," or "to have permission to." (More about this in a minute.) "Yòng" means "to use." "Xìnyòng" means "trustworthiness" or "credit." "Kǎ " means "card." "Ma" is a particle that makes the phrase into a question. Without "ma" the phrase is a statement. When you put these words together, you get a phrase that literally is "Can use credit card?" This means "Can I use a credit card?" or "Can credit cards be used?" You could add "wǒ" ("I") to the Chinese, but it's unnecessary as it would not change the meaning of the sentence. Also, remember that because "kěyǐ" has two third tones in a row you always change the tone on "kě" to second tone.

"Kěyǐ" is placed before a verb to indicate having permission or being allowed to do that verb. Other Chinese words cover having the skills or physical ability to do something. "Kěyǐ" is closest in meaning to the English "may." (As in "May I have some more ice cream?") That being said, "kěyǐ" is used sometimes in situations where it would seem to be the wrong choice. In English many people use "can" incorrectly. Taking the aforementioned ice cream example, many English speakers, especially children, might say "Can I have some more ice cream?" A child's parents might respond by saying, "You can have more ice cream, but you may not." They are pointing out that there is difference between one's physical ability to swallow ice cream and whether one has permission. (Lording grammar knowledge over children is one of the many joys of parenthood.) Chinese people go the other way. They sometimes use "kěyǐ" when talking about physical ability or having a certain set of skills. Sometimes "kěyǐ" gets used in sentences like "Do you think I can read this?" or "You can drink it. It's drinkable." Are these Chinese people using the word incorrectly? Or is this just part of the twisted way "kěyǐ" is meant to be used? This is up for debate and we here at SurvivalPhrases.com don't feel qualified to answer.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
可以用信用卡吗？	Kěyǐ yòng xìnyòngkǎ ma?	Can I use a credit card?
来一碗米饭。	Lài yīwǎn mǐfàn.	Bring out one bowl of rice.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
可以	kěyǐ	may, can
用	yòng	to use
信用卡	xìnyòngkǎ	credit card
吗	ma	particle indicating a question
来	lài	to come
一碗	yīwǎn	bowl, measure word for bowls of food
米饭	mǐfàn	cooked rice

QUICK TIP

A couple words about rice:

Rice usually comes at the end of a Chinese meal. While eating habits differ from person to person, it is customary to eat other food first and then use rice as a "filler." Chinese people may scold you for filling up on rice and failing to eat what they see as the good food. "Eat food, don't eat rice." They will say. ("Chī cài, bùyào chī fàn.") Many foreigners love to take Chinese food and put it on top of their rice. They like to eat the rice and other food together. This helps mellow out the spiciness or the greasiness of Chinese food. The Chinese find this habit puzzling. They like to eat the food straight then eat their rice after.

Chinese dishes tend to have a very short preparation time. The wait staff will start bringing out your order almost as soon as you order it. But, because of Chinese eating habits, they will wait until the end to bring out any rice you have ordered. If you want your rice, just say to the waiter/waitress, "Lài yīwǎn mǐfàn." ("Bring out one bowl of rice.") "Lài" means "to come." "Yī" is "one." "Wǎn" is a measure word for bowls of food. "Mǐfàn" means "cooked rice." (There is a separate word for "uncooked rice.") If you are with other people that want rice, you can just change the number in front of the measure word. You can say, "Lài liǎngwǎn mǐfàn." ("Bring out two bowls of rice.") or "Lài sīwǎn mǐfàn." ("Bring out four bowls of rice.") You use "liǎng" instead of "èr" because we are counting things. (This will be covered in the next lesson. Don't worry.)

Also, never leave your chopsticks sticking up out of your rice. It might seem like a convenient place to put your chopsticks: just stick them into the rice and leave them sticking straight up. This is very bad manners. In Chinese tradition, offerings of food to the dead are left with the chopsticks sticking straight up. To do so with your rice and then continue eating is disrespectful to the dead. (They don't like being taunted.) Luckily most Chinese won't actually be offended by this. Most likely they will laugh at you and warn you that your actions carry a certain meaning.

Instead of putting them in your rice, you can lay your chopsticks across the rim of your rice bowl. Nicer restaurants will often have a little piece of porcelain or china to rest the tips of your chopsticks on.

QUICK TIP 2

In larger cities such as Beijing or Shanghai, there are many special ATMs that accept foreign bank cards in major shopping centers and international hotels. These ATMs will have signage that states that foreign cards can be used. Other than that, ATMs are usually only to be found connected to banks and post offices. Some Chinese bank ATMs will accept foreign cards, but it can be hit or miss. The ATM will have signs illustrating what cards are accepted, but there are still some times when, for unknown reasons, the ATM will refuse your card. Generally if you find a bank that accepts your card once, every branch of that bank will also accept your card. The Bank of China and The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China are two very large and very common banks that accept many cards. Chinese ATMs have a tendency to run out of cash. If your card doesn't work in one ATM you might want to try the one next to it, just to make sure the first one wasn't just out of cash.

All ATMs will remit RMB (Chinese currency) notes. If you want to exchange your RMB back to your home currency on the way out (e.g. at the airport), you'll need to keep the ATM or bank receipt or the exchange won't be accepted.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 16: Counting 1-10

Counting 1-10

LESSON NOTES

What is there to say about the numbers? Practice them, memorize them, use them. The Chinese number system is generally very straightforward. You may find that the biggest problem you have with it is memorizing the new symbols for the numbers. The Chinese do have their own characters for the numbers, and they do use them. Numbers in Chinese characters pop up everywhere, but it will probably be most useful to know them when looking at price tags. Prices written by a machine will probably be in Arabic numerals, the prices in the grocery store will certainly be in Arabic numerals, but hand-written price tags are often written using the Chinese characters. If you go to buy antiques or you go to a little restaurant, you will often find the prices in Chinese characters. This alone makes it worth while to learn the characters. You will also see Chinese numbers on posters, advertisements, and signs all over the place. It's not too hard to learn these characters, and, because of the way the Chinese number system works, once you learn one through ten you will be able to read just about any number.

The Chinese numbers from 10 to 99 follow a very simple and predictable pattern: to say a multiple of ten you just say a number followed by ten. Thus 20 is "èrshí," 30 is "sānshí," 40 is "sìshí," and so on. To add numbers to the ones column just put a number after the multiple of ten you have just created. To say 41 you say "sìshíyī." 52 is "wǔshíèr." 63 is "liùshísān." You get the idea.

There is one other tricky part of the basic Chinese number system: two. There are two words for the number two in Chinese. We can call the first version the counting two or the numerical two. This version, pronounced "èr," is used when you are counting (if you were counting the number of kids in a class you would say, "yī, èr, sān, sì...") or when you are saying numbers like 20 or 42 (20 is "èrshí" and 42 is "sìshíèr"). If you are using the number two to say that you have two of something you must use the word "liǎng." If you want to say there are two people, you say "liǎng ge rén." ("Ge" is a measure word, and talk of measure words must still be saved till later. "Rén" means "person.") Two steamed pork buns is "liǎng ge ròubàozi." ("Ròubàozi" is steamed pork bun.) Whenever you are talking about two of something you use the word "liǎng." Thus "liǎng" is actually used much more often than "èr." Be very careful about this, it will sound incredibly silly if you ask for "èr ge ròubàozi."

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
令	líng	zero

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
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
二十	èrshí	twenty
三十二	sānshíèr	thirty two
两	liǎng	2
人	rén	person
肉豹子	ròubàozi	steamed pork bun

QUICK TIP

"Líng" (0) is almost always written using Arabic numerals. Even on hand-written price tags where everything else is written using Chinese characters, "líng" will probably still be written as "0." This is done for ease of writing and recognition because the character for "líng" has so many strokes in comparison to the other numbers.

QUICK TIP 2

Everyone knows how to use hand signals for the numbers one through five, but the Chinese, being the geniuses that they are (and we are not being sarcastic about this, the Chinese have come up with some really ingenious and simple things over the years) have hand signals that can be done on one hand for all the numbers one through ten. The hand signals imitate the shapes of the Chinese characters. It is a very good idea to learn these, not only because they're cool and convenient, but because many Chinese people will assume that everyone understands them. Often at a market a vendor will tell you a price and then signal it to you using hand signals. They might even repeat these signals if you look confused, because they assume these are universal ways of communicating numbers. Really, many Chinese are astonished to find that Westerners need to use two hand to communicate the number seven. (And they think we look quite silly holding up both our hands.)

The signals are as follows:

One through five: The same as in the West, just raise the corresponding number of fingers. Many Chinese people signal "three" with their pinky, ring, and middle fingers up and their index finger held down.

Six: Stick out your pinky and thumb. Your middle three fingers stay curled down. "Hang ten, dude."

Seven: Press your the tip of your thumb against the tips of your index and middle fingers, pinching them all together. Your other fingers stay curled.

Eight: Stick out your index finger and thumb. Curl up all the other fingers.

Nine: Clench all your fingers except the index finger. Curl your index into a fish hook position.

Ten: There are three ways of doing ten. The first is to cross your index and middle fingers. The second is a closed fist. The third requires two hands and is one index finger across the other to form a cross. (Michael apologizes, but he took the pictures of his hand by himself. He could not take a picture of the third method because it requires two hands.)

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 17: How Much?
多 少 钱? Duōshǎo qián?

LESSON NOTES

China has been experiencing tremendous growth in recent years, and the country is abound with all types of goods and products. It is not a question of whether you will find something you like, but rather a question of how long will it take. When you finally find something that you like, the next step will be to find out how much it costs. In China, there are many shops, stores, street venders and merchants, and while the number of department stores is increasing, a tremendous amount of business is done by these small dealers, who rarely tag the items they are selling with the price. Therefore, asking the price is a crucial step in shopping in China.

In Chinese the phrase used for asking the price is Duōshǎo qián? (How much (money)?). The phrase literally means "A lot, a little money?" Looking at the components of the sentence, duō means many. Shǎo means few, and qián is a noun meaning money. Therefore we have "Many, few money?" or "A lot, or a little money?" Almost as if the question is "Will it cost a lot or will is cost a little (money)? Perhaps thinking of the phrase Duōshǎo qián? (How much?) in this manner will help you to remember it.

For something located close by, you can refer to the thing with the word zhège (this). Therefore, to inquire about the price of something nearby Zhège duōshǎo qián? (How much does this cost?) . Notice here that the word zhège (this) precedes the question Duōshǎo qián? (How much?). The placement of this at the beginning of the sentence differs from the English construction, in which this comes last.

The phrase duō (much) + shǎo (few) is used to refer to quantity and can mean how much or how many, as its English translation depends directly the something be inquired about. In today's phrase, Duōshǎo qián? (How much (money)?) the something is money, so the phrase is translated as ”How much (money)?” Duōshǎo is used when talking about abstract figures, an irregular amount of something, or amounts exceeding approximately ten pcs (for example, people, cars, money, stars).

Qián (money) is the word for money; however, yuan is the currency used in China. Furthermore, when referred to in spoken Chinese, yuan is referred to kuài.

If you are buying something that costs, let's say 3 yuan, that'll be sān kuài in Chinese. Answering the inquiry would go like this: Sān kuài qián. = ”It costs three yuan”. Like in many other languages, you do not need to utter the whole sentence with the verb and everything in it -- giving the figures will suffise: sān kuài = ”three ”.

Please pay attention to the word you use when talking about the number 2: when talking about prices, use the word liǎng not èr . Èr refers to numerals, not to a quantity of something.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
多 少 钱?	Duōshǎo qián?	How much?
这 个 多 少 钱?	Zhège duōshǎo qián?	How much does this cost?
那个 多 少 钱?	Nàge duōshǎo qián?	How much does that cost?

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
多	duō	many
少	shǎo	few
这	zhè	this
个	ge	counter
钱	qián	money
那	nà	that
这 个	zhège	this (pronoun)
那个	nàge	that (pronoun)
两	liǎng	two
二	èr	two

QUICK TIP

When shopping at department stores or outlets with many stores, the register may be in a different location! Therefore, you may have to leave the store you buying something at to pay the bill in a different location! You will then return with the paid receipt to claim your property.

QUICK TIP 2

While the number of shops and store that accept credit cards continues to increase, the are still many stores that do not accept credit cards as a form of payment. Therefore, be sure to carry cash when you go shopping, and be sure to haggle! See the next lesson.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 18: Lower the Price Please!
太贵阿。Tài gùi ā.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
太贵阿。	Tài gùi ā.	Too expensive.
便宜一点。	Píanyi yī diǎn.	A little cheaper (please).
便宜一点儿。	Píanyi yī diǎr.	A little cheaper (please). Beijing Dialect

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
太	tài	too (much)
贵	guì	expensive
便宜	píanyi	cheap
一点	yī diǎn	a bit, a little

QUICK TIP

Try to get the person selling the good to say a price. The right price for something is usually several times lower than your first quote. Try to avoid the "foreign" premium at all costs!

QUICK TIP 2

Attaching r to the end of the phrase is common in Beijing.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 19: Please Pass The Chopsticks!

请给我筷子。Qǐng gěi wǒ kuàizi.

LESSON NOTES

Today's lesson goes through navigating a crowded noodle shop, but really today's phrase can be used whenever you need someone to hand you something. The phrase is "Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge." It literally means "Please give me that." "Qǐng" means "please." "Gěi" is "to give." "Wǒ" means "I" or "me." "Nàge" means "that." Really simple, really straightforward, right guys? The biggest problem with the phrase is the ubiquitous third tones. The first three characters are all third tones. We here at SurvivalPhrases.com should own up to being bad about sticking to our own rule of thumb on changing third tones. Or rather, we should admit that we have used two competing rules. There was a turf war during the recording over which rule should be used. One rule of thumb says that third tones must always be broken up by a second tone. That would change the second third tone here ("gěi") into a second tone. The other rule says that when addressing a string of third tones, all but the last third tone become second tones. In actuality, neither of these are iron-clad rules. Changing third tones into second tones depends on which third tones one views as really being connected and where you think you can place a pause in between third tones. This requires a feel for the language that no one expects beginners to have. Thus the rules of thumb. Regrettably, some of the residue from our battle over which rule to use has leaked into the lessons. For most of the lessons we use the first rule. But in this lesson we used the second rule. Both these rules are used by Chinese instructors when teaching beginners, which one they choose just depends on the instructor's preference. Neither one is right, they are both just ways to push the problem aside until later. You, the beginner, should feel free to use either rule until you get a better feeling for the language. We apologize for any confusion this causes. Unfortunately, all wars leave their scars.

In this lesson Michael changed the first two tones to second tones. This means the sentence is pronounced: "Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge." You could also use the rule we've been going with before and just change the second character to a second tone. In this case the sentence is pronounced: "Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge." Again, these are just rules of thumb, it doesn't matter which you use.

The sentence "Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge." means "Please give me that." You can point at things and say this and people will generally know what you mean. But what if it's not totally clear what "that" is? In the noodle shop the chopsticks are generally in a container on a tray at one end of the table. This tray also has soy sauce, vinegar, and hot pepper on it. How is your fellow diner to know which one you want? You have to be more specific. To be specific about what you want, just replace "nàge" with a noun. The Chinese word for "chopsticks" is "kuàizi." To say you want chopsticks all you have to say is "Qǐng gěi wǒ kuàizi." You could say this if you want someone sitting next to you to pass the chopsticks, or you could say it to the shop's staff if there are no chopsticks in sight.

Now what about the other things on the tray? Depending on their tastes, Chinese people have been known to add any of these things (soy sauce, vinegar, or hot pepper) to their noodles. These are also necessary dipping sauces for dumplings. "Soy sauce" is "jiàngyóu." "Vinegar" is "cù." "Hot pepper" is "làjiāo." Just insert any of these into the phrase to ask for them. "Qǐng gěi wǒ jiàngyóu." is "Please give me the soy sauce." "Qǐng gěi wǒ cù." is "Please pass the vinegar." "Qǐng gěi wǒ làjiāo." is "Please give me the hot pepper."

One other thing you will almost certainly have to ask for in a restaurant are napkins. Many smaller restaurants are very bad about keeping napkins at the table. In this case you will have to ask for them specifically. The word for "napkin" is "cāntīngzhǐ." "Cāntīng" means "restaurant" and "zhǐ" means "paper." Our whole phrase together would be "Qǐng gěi wǒ cāntīngzhǐ."

One last wrinkle for this phrase. What if you want to ask for a specific something from a group of that thing? What if there are a bunch of cups on the table and you want that one, over there, the one that hasn't been used? You can't just say, "Please give me a cup." You would point and say, "Please give me that cup." It is really easy to add this into the sentence. "Cup" in Chinese is "bēizi." "Please give me that cup." would be "Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge bēizi." We just added "cup" right after "that" from the original phrase. You can do this with any noun.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
请给我那个。	Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge.	Please give me that.
请给我筷子。	Qǐng gěi wǒ kuàizi.	Please give me chopsticks.
请给我餐厅纸。	Qǐng gěi wǒ cāntīngzhǐ.	Please give me napkins.
请给我那个杯子。	Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge bēizi.	Please give me that cup.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
请	qǐng	please
给	gěi	to give
我	wǒ	I, me
那个	nàge	that
这个	zhège	this
筷子	kuàizi	chopsticks
酱油	jiàngyóu	soy sauce
醋	cù	vinegar
辣椒	làjiāo	hot pepper
餐厅纸	cāntīngzhǐ	napkin
杯子	bēizi	cup
叉子	chāzi	fork
勺子	sháozi	spoon

QUICK TIP

In these lessons we have been translating "zhège" and "nàge" as "this" and "that." Technically, though, "zhè" and "nà" by themselves mean "this" and "that." "Ge," as we've said before, is a multi-purpose measure word, it is a measure word for anything. "Zhè" and "nà" mean "this" and "that," but in Chinese "this" and "that" must always be followed by a measure word. Thus they are often followed by "ge." There is no way to translate the "ge" in "nàge," so we just translate the whole thing as "that." In the last part of this PDF we made the sentence "Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge bēizi." ("Please give me that cup.") "Bēizi" uses the measure word "ge," so we don't need to change "nàge" at all. If we were making this sentence with a different noun, we might have to change the measure word that we use. We're not going to introduce any new measure words here, we just want you to know what function "ge" serves in this sentence and how "nà" works.

QUICK TIP 2

"Fork" in Chinese is "chāzi." "Spoon" is "shǎozi."

But you still need to learn to use chopsticks. Almost no Chinese restaurants have forks. (They do all have spoons.) Chopsticks are not hard to use and there are many ways to use them. (Though there is a standard way. Many Chinese people lament that their chopstick style is not standard.) Unfortunately, using chopsticks is more of a hands-on thing, so you will actually need someone to teach you in person. It's outside the scope of these lessons. Most people can get good at chopsticks after one or two lessons. And learning to use chopsticks is a great way to makes friends with Chinese people you meet.

Chinese people don't necessarily use chopsticks for everything, though. Often when eating rice mixed with other things (as in fried rice, for example) the Chinese use spoons. Rice, when it is mixed with other things, becomes very slippery and hard to grab with the chopsticks. The Chinese will think you're weird if you try to eat fried rice with chopsticks.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 20: Internet Cafe
网吧在哪儿？Wǎngbā zài nǎr?

LESSON NOTES

Until global mobile phone service becomes a realistic communication option (it exists, but jeez is it expensive), the internet is how travelers communicate. In this sense China is a very travel friendly country. There are internet cafes set up all over the place. Many, probably most, Chinese people don't have their own computer. Even if they do have a computer, and that computer is hooked up to the internet, personal internet connections are not fast enough to support avid computer users. Michael complains often that he cannot watch YouTube in China. It's not that it's censored or anything like that, it's just that his internet connection is too slow to support streaming video. Internet cafes feature high-speed connections and thus are swarmed by young people wanting to download TV shows and movies, shoot terrorists, slay ogres, and have video chats. Generally people who need the internet for more serious pursuits have a connection in their home or office, and business communications do not require high speed internet. The "wǎngbā" ("internet cafe") is a rowdy meeting ground filled with teenagers and young men with headsets yelling out commands in the shooting game Counterstrike ("He's on your left! On your left!" "Follow me!"), people smoking cigarettes while they catch up on their favorite Korean soap operas, and boys and girls meeting people of the opposite sex through video chat. Mixed in with this there is sometimes a traveler emailing their friends back home. That's who you want to be.

First let's get you to an internet cafe. "Internet cafe" in Chinese is "wǎngbā." "Wǎng" means "net" or "web." Just as Westerners refer to the internet as "the net" or "the web," the Chinese call the internet "wǎng." "Bā" mimics the English word "bar." Thus internet cafes in China are literally called "internet bars." The word for a bar where you drink alcohol is "jiǔbā." "Jiǔ" means "alcohol." But, as Michael said, that is something for another lesson.

If you are in a city, odds are there is an internet cafe within walking distance. You can ask the desk clerks at your hotel, or, if you are wandering the streets, just ask a passer by. As the internet cafe caters to young people, your best bet is to ask someone under 40. If we think back to an earlier lesson (Lesson 6, "Where Is the Bathroom?"), we will remember that "where" is "zài nǎr." To ask where the internet cafe is all you have to do is combine the word for "internet cafe" with the phrase for "where": "Wǎngbā zài nǎr?" ("Internet cafe where?") Chinese is often a very simple language. Making new sentences is usually just a matter of pressing words and phrases together. (As opposed to conjugating words or taking into account whether something is an adjective or an adverb.) You probably won't understand the directions the person you ask gives, but hopefully they will point. Just keep following fingers. Go 100 meters in the direction they point, then ask again. Asking multiple people is always a good strategy, it's surprising how often people are confused about their own neighborhood. (And we're not saying this is just a Chinese problem.)

There is usually no sign that says "internet cafe" in English. Internet cafes are hard to find even if you're fluent in Chinese. They are often in basements or on the second or third floors of office buildings. Learn the characters for "wǎngbā" (they are at the end of the PDF), maybe write them down, and keep your eyes open. Keep looking up, checking all signs for these two characters. It is in the internet cafe's best interests to have them displayed prominently, but the characters still have a tendency to get lost in the collage of signs that often cover building faces.

You've found the internet cafe. You walk up the stairs and come out into a spacious dark room with rows and rows of computers. Right by the entrance there is a desk, like a hotel's check-in desk. This is where you get the password which allows you to use the computers. You don't need to say anything to the desk clerks, most people don't. Almost all internet cafes work on a deposit system. When you come in, you give the desk clerks 10 yuan and they keep this as your balance at the cafe. When you leave they will deduct the fee for the amount of time you spent and give you the remainder of your balance. The base price is usually three yuan per hour. Most internet cafes also want ID when you enter. All Chinese people are required to have their ID card number recorded before they are given access to the computers. The desk clerks will sometimes want your passport. If they need your passport they will know how to say it in English. Many places won't require you to show ID because you're a foreigner. They may not have a system for keeping track of foreigners, or maybe they think trying to communicate is too much trouble. Either way, they will probably just take your deposit and give you a card with a computer password. (This is a recurring theme in China. Often Chinese people don't say anything to foreigners because they figure they would not be able to communicate with you.)

You may or may not be assigned a computer. More and more internet cafes are letting people pick their own spots. Many places now have different sections that cost different prices. Better chairs and private rooms add to the hourly price. If your card has a two or three digit number that looks like it corresponds to numbers pasted on the computers, then you should try to find the computer that corresponds to your number. If not, just pick any seat you like. On the card will be a number that is usually between four and eight digits. This is your password. In some internet cafes you have to turn on the computer when you sit down, in some places the computers are already on. After the computer is booted up there will be a screen with some blank fields for you to plug in your password. Figuring out where to enter your password can be very confusing. Many times Chinese people in the internet cafe have to call over an attendant to help them figure out what to do. There will be attendants walking through the rows, sometimes stopping at a friend's computer to watch him play a game, looking for people that need help. These attendants are almost always thin, young men. (In contrast, the desk clerks are usually young women.) You will be able to recognize the attendants by their company clothing. You can just raise your hand and look around and one of them may see you, or you can approach one of them walking around. If you say to them "Qǐng bāng wǒ." they will go with you to your computer and try their best to solve whatever problem you have. ("Qǐng" means "please." "Bāng" is "to help." "Wǒ" means "I" or "me." The phrase is literally "Please help me.") If you just don't know where to enter the password, they will enter it for you. If your problem is with accessing a page or downloading something, they will try their best, but if the page is in English they may be just as lost as you. If your computer is having problems (perhaps you accidentally got it into Chinese mode and now it will only write Chinese characters) they will either fix the problem or ask you to switch computers. Once they've got you set up, the computer runs like any other Windows machine. Everything will be in Chinese, but, if you're at all familiar with the system, this shouldn't be too much of a problem.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
网吧在哪儿？	Wǎngbā zài nǎr?	Where is an internet cafe?
请帮我。	Qǐng bāng wǒ.	Please help me.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
网吧	wǎngbā	internet cafe
在	zài	at, in, exist
哪儿	nǎr	where
请	qǐng	please
帮	bāng	help
我	wǒ	I, me

QUICK TIP

Get there early in the day. Gamers tend to be nocturnal. If you get to the internet cafe before the afternoon you can beat the rush. The internet cafe is infinitely more pleasant when it's not filled with lots of loud, sweaty guys smoking cigarettes and cursing at each other. Maybe if the windows were open that would be okay, but they're not.

QUICK TIP 2

The Chinese government does not like the internet. Alright, maybe that's not exactly right, but they certainly eye the internet suspiciously. The government does its best to control which pages are available in China. You may not run into any of these restrictions, major companies make an effort to conform to Chinese government rules, but pages that are anti-Chinese government will certainly be inaccessible in China. Certain news websites become unavailable from time to time. You couldn't get Wikipedia for a long time, but recently it's been accessible. The restrictions are much stricter for Chinese language websites than they are for English ones. For example, you can usually get on the BBC's main website. But if you click on the link that gets you BBC news in Chinese your server mysteriously stops responding. This is true for many websites, but, if you stick to English, you can generally surf the web unfettered.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 21: Riding the Bus 1 - Does this bus go to Beijing?

到北京站马。Dào Běijīng zhàn ma?

LESSON NOTES

Today's lesson is not for the faint of heart. It is not for those who mind being hot, who terribly dislike crowded, smelly places, who don't like being pushed. If you fit into any of these categories, you might want to skip the next three lessons.

That being said, we here at SurvivalPhrases.com highly recommend riding the bus at least once. The bus is a supremely Chinese experience. Sure it doesn't have the history or grandeur of the Great Wall, but the bus is something that hundreds of millions of Chinese people experience every day of their lives. It is a window into the life of an average Chinese person. (As opposed to the Great Wall, which most Chinese people get to see once in their life, if they are lucky.) Most foreigners in China spend all their time in taxis getting carted door to door. In addition from separating you from the average Chinese person, this also disconnects you from the place you are in. In a taxi you get much less of a feeling of your surroundings, you don't notice where you are going; you get in, zone out, arrive, and get out. The bus forces you to locate yourself in the city you are in. It forces you to see this city as an actual place you can navigate around as opposed to a bunch of isolated spots connected by time spent in the backseat of a cab. Plus, the bus is way cheaper than a taxi. Most bus rides cost one yuan. (If the bus is air-conditioned or your destination is especially far away it will cost two yuan. That's right, most buses are not air-conditioned. Buses in Shanghai all cost two yuan no matter where you go.) Taxi rides start at about 10 yuan (it depends on what city you are in) and go up from there. In a big city like Beijing a cab ride can cost 80 yuan. Of course, that's still only 10 USD; but it's the principle of the matter. Taking the bus, while more challenging than a taxi, is completely doable and very interesting. Though no one will begrudge you a taxi ride at the end of a long day spent on your feet.

Your bus adventure starts, of course, at the bus stop. The bus stop will have a bunch of signs with the numbers of different bus routes. There should also be a sign above these with the name of the bus stop you are at in Chinese and then romanized into pinyin. We say "should" because unfortunately these signs have a nasty habit of falling. At the stop, each bus route has a sign that is about a foot and a half wide and about eight inches high. (That's about 45cm by 20cm for all you metric users.) On the sign is the route number (in Arabic numerals, luckily). Next to the route number the first and last stops are written in large characters and their romanization is underneath them. Below this is a list of the stops the bus goes to listed from left to right. On most signs the stop you are at is marked, either with an arrow or by having the characters in a different color. Unfortunately, the only places at the bus stop where there is romanization is on the sign for your current stop (if it's still standing) and the first and last stops on each route sign. Everything else will only be in Chinese characters. That means you have three options:

1. Memorize the characters for the stop you want to go to.

2. Get somebody to write down the characters, then match them with the bus sign. (In lesson 33 we will go over the phrase "Please write it down." and there is a reminder in that lesson that this is helpful for riding the bus.)

3. Ask the bus driver or people at the stop if the bus goes where you want to go. We recommend all three. Try to memorize the characters, have the characters written down to back up your memory, then ask people just to make sure (and to be sure you're not going in the wrong direction.)

Don't be afraid to ask the bus driver about the stop you're going to. Chinese people do it all the time. When the bus pulls up and the doors open, lean in and shout "Dào (the stop you need to go to) ma?" In the lesson, the stop Michael used was "Běijīng zhàn." ("Beijing station." "Zhàn" means station. The main train station in Beijing is called "Běijīng zhàn.") The question, using "Běijīng zhàn," would be: "Dào Běijīng zhàn ma?" Literally this is: "Arrive at Beijing station?" It can be translated, however, as "Does this bus go to Beijing station?" "Dào" means "to arrive." In English we would ask, "Does this bus go to Beijing station?" but in Chinese, when you are talking about the destination of a form of transportation, you often do not use "qù" ("to go"), but rather "dào." Thus we use "dào" in this lesson's phrase. The "ma" at the end of the phrase makes the phrase a question. It is kind of like the "does" that we add onto the beginning of the English phrase "Does this bus go to Beijing station?" Without "ma" the phrase would be "Dào Běijīng zhàn." This would be translated into English as "This bus goes to Beijing station." That would be an awfully confusing thing to yell at a bus driver. ("Ma" has no tone, but, because you are asking a question, it is natural to have your tone rise up a little at the end of the phrase.) In between "dào" and "ma" you place the name of the station you are asking about. Michael used "Běijīng zhàn," but you can switch that for any other station name. If you wanted to go to Tian'anmen ("Tiān'ānmén") you could just say "Dào Tiān'ānmén ma?" (Notice that the word "zhàn" is not part of this phrase. "Běijīng zhàn" being a train station has "zhàn" in its name. "Zhàn" is just part of that particular stop's name. You don't add "zhàn" onto the end of every bus stop name.) This phrase translates as "Does this bus go to Tian'anmen?" Notice, also, that we don't have to say "this bus" when we are talking to the bus driver. That we are talking about this bus is obvious from the context and, in Chinese, objects and subjects that are obvious based on context do not have to be said.

The bus driver will shout at you. Don't be shaken. They are just in a rush and they are afraid you won't hear. They don't have a lot of time to waste repeating themselves and you are in the way of the other people who want to get on. They will shout one of two things: "Dào." or "Bùdào." "Dào" (the same "to arrive" as before) means "Yes, this bus does go there." "Bùdào." means "No, it does not." (Remember that the fourth tone on "bù" will change to a second tone because the word following it is fourth tone.) Chinese people do not answer questions with "yes" or "no." In Chinese there is no exact equivalent of "yes." Instead people confirm the answer to a question by repeating the verb (or in some cases the adjective) you are asking with. Here you are asking whether the bus will arrive at a particular place and the bus driver confirms this by saying the verb "dào" ("to arrive").

If you don't want to get tangled in the rush of people getting on the bus, if you don't like the pressure of yelling back and forth with the bus driver, then you might try asking one of the other people at the stop. You can get their attention by using the "Bǎdàoyìsī." we learned way back in lesson number 10. Then point to a bus sign and say "Zhè ge chē dào (where you want to go) ma?" This is the same as the previous phrase, but we have added "zhè ge chē ." This means

"this bus." When talking to the bus driver it was unnecessary to include this, but when talking to other people at the stop it is unclear which bus you are talking about. Thus you must point to a bus sign and say "zhè ge chē." "Zhè" means "this." "Ge" is a measure word connecting "zhè" and "chē." (Notice that it has no tone.) "Chē" literally means "car" but we can use it here to mean "bus." (See Quick Tip 1.) If we are asking about Tian'anmen, our whole phrase is "Zhè ge chē dào Tiān'ānmén ma?" ("Does this bus go to Tian'anmen?") Having these two phrases does not necessarily mean for a fool-proof bus ride, but don't be afraid to make mistakes, we all do; remember, you can do this, and, if all else fails, you can always take a taxi.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到北京站吗？	Dào Běijīng zhàn ma?	Does (this bus) go to Beijing? (To the driver.)
这个车到北京吗？	Zhè ge chē dào Běijīng ma?	Will this bus go to Beijing?
到天安门吗？	Dào Tiān'ānmén ma?	Does (this bus) go to Tian'anmen? (To the driver.)
这个车到北京站吗？	Zhè ge chē dào Běijīng zhàn ma?	Does this bus go to Beijing station? (To anyone.)
三二八路	sānèrbā lù	Route 328
坐车	zuòchē	Ride the bus.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到	dào	to arrive
吗	ma	particle that designates a question
北京	Běijīng	Beijing
站	zhàn	station
车	chē	car, bus, anything with wheels that you can ride in/on
天安门	Tiān'ānmén	Tian'anmen
路	lù	road, path
坐	zuò	to sit

QUICK TIP

While "chē" literally means "car," it can be used to mean any kind of rideable thing. People always refer to buses as "chē." The act of riding the bus is called "zuòchē." (Literally "sit car.") People use "chē" to refer to bikes. They will point at your bike and ask, "Nà shì nǐ de chē ma?" (Literally it translates as "That is your car?" but it means "Is that your bike?") The word "chē" predates the car and in olden times referred to carts. It now means anything with wheels that you can ride on/in.

QUICK TIP 2

Saying a group of numbers then adding the word "lù" designates a bus route. In the lesson Michael talked about taking route 328. In Chinese this would be "sānèrbā lù." Chinese people very rarely talk about a bus as being "route three hundred twenty eight," they just say the numbers directly. ("Lù" literally means "road" or "path." Here we can think of it as meaning "route.") There is only one caveat to this very simple system: when talking about bus numbers, instead of saying "yī" for "one," you say "yāo." Thus bus 711, which Michael mentioned in the lesson, would be called "qīyāoyāo lù." Michael is occasionally, very occasionally, lazy and skips something in the lessons. Here he obviously enjoyed hinting at this problem, but not talking about it. The pronunciation of "one" is changed while talking about numbers so that "one" will not be mistaken for "seven." "Qī" and "yī" sound very similar. Imagine if bus 711 was called "qīyīyī lù." That would be something of a tongue-twister. This rule applies not just to bus routes, but to any time you are saying a group of numbers. The other place you will probably hear "one" pronounced as "yāo" is in phone numbers.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 22: Riding the Bus 2 - Where is the bus going?

到哪儿?Dào nǎr?

LESSON NOTES

First, a disclaimer: Michael lives in Beijing. Bus systems in different parts of China can be somewhat different. In Shanghai, for example, there is only a bus driver on the bus. There is no one selling tickets. As was mentioned in the PDF accompanying the last lesson, bus tickets in Shanghai are all a fixed price, two yuan, unlike Beijing where they vary based on the kind of bus and the distance you are going. Thus, in Shanghai, there is no need for another person on the bus selling tickets. First, a disclaimer: Michael lives in Beijing. Bus systems in different parts of China can be somewhat different. In Shanghai, for example, there is only a bus driver on the bus. There is no one selling tickets. As was mentioned in the PDF accompanying the last lesson, bus tickets in Shanghai are all a fixed price, two yuan, unlike Beijing where they vary based on the kind of bus and the distance you are going. Thus, in Shanghai, there is no need for another person on the bus selling tickets. Everyone just slips two yuan into a slot (or swipes their card) as they get on the bus. The bus driver is responsible for making sure everyone pays. In other places, there are other variations to this process. Michael, and the rest of us at SurvivalPhrases.com, would like to be able to lead you through every situation, but there is just not enough time for that, and we have not been in every possible situation ourselves. We hope that we at least give you what you need to be ready to face these challenges yourself.

The bus is interesting because it is an adventure. It is not the most comfortable or the most convenient way to travel. (Depending on the distance and area, the most convenient way might be taxi, subway, or bike.) Figuring out which bus to take is a puzzle. Getting on the bus can be a physical trial. The official rule is that people should wait for other passengers to get off before they try to get on. The workers on the bus will be shouting this to the people waiting at the bus stop as they pull up. (In Chinese they yell, "Xiān xià, hòu shàng." which literally means "First get off, later get on." but unfortunately we don't have time to go over that right now.) Many people ignore the exhortations of the bus staff. They dig their arms and elbows behind the backs of those getting off and pry an opening to squeeze themselves into. This gets worse the more people there are on the bus and reaches its peak during the rush hours. Things are improving however, and it should be noted that there has been great change in the last few years, with many more people waiting calmly for other passengers to get off first. It may even be that now most people are pretty polite and reasonable about letting others off. Still, the rush hour crush washes away the better manners of all but the most dignified, and with good reason: being unwilling to push, especially when you are one of the last to get on, means you might lose a spot that could very well have been yours. So, while we here at SurvivalPhrases.com implore you to be calm and well-mannered, there is nothing wrong with a little calm and well-mannered squeezing, a vigorous throwing of oneself into the mash of bodies. This is a new culture and you should experience it first-hand. Just don't forget your smile, your "Bùhǎoyìsi!" and your "Duìbùqǐ!"

Once on the bus your next step is to buy a ticket. In Beijing there will almost always be a person on the bus whose job it is to sell tickets. There are a handful of routes (in a system of hundreds of routes) where you put money into a slot as you get on (like in Shanghai), but these are very rare. This person selling tickets will often be in a little railed off part of the bus towards the middle, though sometimes they walk around the bus. You will be able to recognize them because the are wearing the company clothing for their particular bus company and they are carrying a clip-book of tickets. (Michael apologizes for arbitrarily assuming that the person selling tickets is a woman. Often times this person is a woman, but not always. He recognizes it was wrong of him to generalize. If you find this apology unnecessary, just realize that Michael's mother came of age in the sixties and maybe you'll understand better.) If you don't find the ticket seller, they will find you, but in a very crowded bus it is necessary that you stay alert, and helpful for you to be active in buying your ticket. The person selling tickets will want to know where you are going so they can give you the right price ticket. Sometimes, however, they will not speak to you. If you are not Asian, they will often assume that you cannot speak Chinese and thus will not try to communicate with you. They will just hold up a number of fingers that corresponds with the price of the ticket. If they do speak to you, they will ask "Dào nǎr?" "Dào" should be recognizable from the last lesson, it means "to arrive." "Nǎr" is a combination of "nǎ" ("which") and "er," together they mean "where." The phrase is literally "Arrive where?" but, as we have said before, "dào" can be interpreted as "going to" and thus our phrase becomes "Where are you going?" Two things to remember:

1. No word for "you" needs to be included because it is obvious from the circumstances that they are asking about you.

2. We do not need "ma" in this question. When there is a question word in the phrase (like "who," "what" or "where") we no longer put "ma" at the end.

In response to this question you can reply "Dào (where ever you are going." or just say the name of your destination. Both are equally good. Using our old example of "Dào Běijīng" ("Beijing station"), you would reply: "Dào Běijīng zhàn." or just simply "Běijīng zhàn."

The ticket seller will then tell you how much your ticket costs. Most of the time (in Beijing) the price will be one yuan. The ticket vendor will say to you "Yī kuài." Then they will hold up one finger. (Here your Chinese does not have to be great.) The main denomination in the Chinese currency, the Rénmínbì (or RMB), is the "yuán." This is kind of like the US "dollar." When people are speaking, however, they don't usually use the word "yuán," they usually say "kuài." "Yuán" is used in writing and in a little more formal situations. This is kind of like the relationship between the American English words "dollar" and "buck." Thus the ticker seller will say to you "Yī kuài." ("One yuan.") Bus tickets in Beijing are almost always one yuan. They will be more expensive only if you are going a long distance, you are on an express bus, or you are riding an air conditioned bus. Again, most buses are not air conditioned. Many Chinese people like to claim that the Chinese have no body odor, that body odor is something that only Westerners give off. Being in a packed, non-air conditioned bus disproves this. When given this example most Chinese will say, "Well, yeah, we do have a little body odor, but nothing like Westerners." Yeah... If you happen to be riding an air conditioned bus your ticket will probably cost "liǎng kuài." ("Two yuan.") Notice that we use "liǎng" and not "èr." We are talking about a quantity of something and thus use "liǎng." The only way you can end up with a ticket of more than two yuan is by combining two factors that cause more expensive tickets; riding an air conditioned bus for a very long distance, for example. Michael reports that only one time has he had a ticket that cost as much as four yuan.

After the seller tells you how much your ticket is, pass them the money and take your ticket. Don't throw away your ticket until you get off the bus. It is your proof that you have paid. Almost all the time the ticket seller will remember you (especially if you are not Asian), but it is still better to have it just in case.

Congratulations, you have gotten past this part of your adventure, now you've got just one more hurdle: getting off at the right stop.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到哪儿?	Dào nǎr?	Where are you going?
到北京站。	Dào Běijīng zhàn.	(I am going) to Beijing station.
一块	yī kuài	one yuan
两快	liǎng kuài	two yuan
先下后上。	Xiān xià, hòu shàng.	Let people off before you get on.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到	dào	to arrive
哪儿	nǎr	where
站	zhàn	station
人民币	rénmínbì	the Chinese currency
元	yuán	main denomination of the RMB
块	kuài	common way to refer to yuán.
下	xià	down, to get off
上	shàng	up, to get on

QUICK TIP

In Beijing and in many other cities, certain doors on the bus are designated for getting on and others for getting off. These doors are marked with Chinese characters, so it might be a good idea to memorize these two characters. "Xià" means "down" or "to get off." "Shàng" means "up" or "to get on." The characters will be posted next to the doors. In a bus with only two doors, the front door is for getting on and the back door for getting off. There are some extended buses that are two cars connected together and have three or four doors. On these buses the middle door(s) are for boarding and the front and back doors for getting off. Separating these doors is actually very good for the whole bus experience because it cuts down on pushing to get on and it allows the staff to more clearly monitor who's paid.

QUICK TIP 2

Anybody who's taken a lot of buses in their lifetime knows this rule: Move to the back of the bus. Unfortunately, people everywhere in the world are horrible about following this rule. They will stop as soon as they get on the bus, everyone clumps together up there, and the front of the bus becomes a mass of sharp elbows and heavy feet. The back of the bus always, always has more space. There are also more seats back there. Moving to the back of the bus gives you first shot at a seat when somebody gets up. Move back there and you will stand cool and calm, staring at the cramped masses, wondering where they lost their common sense.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 23: Riding the Bus 3 - Please tell me when we arrive.

到的时候，请叫我。Dào de shíhou, qǐng jiào wǒ.

LESSON NOTES

Possibly the most worrisome part of the bus ride, especially when it's your first time going somewhere in a foreign country, is waiting on the bus, trying to pick out the right stop. The bus is not like the subway, where the stops have very large, clearly written signs. On the bus you often have to pick out your stop based on recognizing landmarks. If it's your first time going to a certain area, picking out landmarks is out of the question. In Beijing, the bus stops are either announced over a loud speaker or yelled out by the person selling tickets as you go along. Sometimes there is even a digital sign at the front of the bus, but it is only in Chinese and it only flashes the name of the next stop one or two times. Most of the time it's displaying messages reminding riders to be courteous. The loud speakers are almost always garbled. Sometimes they have English, but all the English says is "The next stop is..." and then the name of the stop very quickly in Chinese. It's really rather funny, as if the information that was most important on the loud speakers were those four words "The next stop is" and not the actual name of the stop. If the ticket seller is yelling out the names of stops themselves, you don't even have to bother listening, most Chinese people don't even understand what the ticket sellers say. Yelling all day for a living causes you to distort your words. But what the ticket sellers lack in clarity of speech, they make up for in attentiveness. If you're at all worried about where you are or where to get off, the ticket sellers will always help you to the best of their ability. People sometimes complain about the service in China, but this is one place it won't let you down. Your best bet is to ask the ticket seller to keep an eye out for you. When you buy your ticket, say to the ticket seller, "Dào de shíhou, qǐng jiào wǒ." This means "Please tell me when we get there." If you say this, when the bus arrives at your stop, the ticket seller will tap you on the shoulder (or call out to you if they can't reach you), give you a meaningful look, and say "Dào le." (Literally "Arrived." but here it means "We've arrived." or "We're at your stop.") Let's break down the phrase. The first half is "dào de shíhou." "Dào" means "to arrive." "De" is a possessive particle. "Shíhou" means time. Together these mean "the time of arrival" or "when we arrive." The next half of the phrase is "qǐng jiào wǒ." "Qǐng" means "please." "Jiào" means "to call (somebody)." "Wǒ" means "I" or "me." Altogether this half of the phrase is "please call me." When we put our two halves together the phrase becomes "When we arrive, please call me." If you say this to the ticket seller, they will, no fail, get you when it's your stop. Sometimes it requires the cooperation of other people on the bus to reach you across a crowd, but it's kind of wonderful to watch people who normally look so disorganized working together to make sure the foreigner gets off at the right stop. Knowing that you are in good hands, you can settle down for your ride and start memorizing landmarks for next time. Remember this help that you have received and make sure you let China know that you appreciate it.

But what if you didn't say anything to the ticket seller? What if the bus has been too crowded and you haven't even gotten to the ticket seller yet, but you're worried your stop is coming up? In these cases you might want to ask the person next to you what the next stop is. First you might want to use the "Bu4hao3yi4si1." we learned back in lesson 10. Then, after you've got their attention, use this phrase from today's lesson: "Xià yīge zhān shì shénme?" "Xià" means "down," but it can also mean "next." "Yī" is "one." "Ge" is a measure word. "Zhān" means "station." Together this first half of the phrase is "next one station" or just "next station." "Shì" means "to be." "Shénme" means "what." So the whole phrase together is "Next station is what?" In English, we would put the words in a different order and say "What is the next station?" In Chinese, question words (like "what") don't come in any particular spot in the sentence, you just replace a word in the sentence with a question word to turn it into a question. If we wanted to say, "The next stop is Beijing station." we would say, "Xià yīge zhān shì Běijīng zhàn." To turn this statement into a question we just replace "Běijīng zhàn" with the question word "shénme." In English, we would have to put the "what" at the beginning of the sentence. In Chinese, no reordering is required. (And remember, "ma" is not used when you have a question word.) Thus you can ask the person next to you "Xià yīge zhān shì shénme?" and they will tell you what the next stop is, and you can know whether or not to get off.

From everyone here at the SurvivalPhrases.com to all you adventurers, good luck and "jiāyóu!"

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到的时候，请叫我。	Dào de shíhou, qǐng jiào wǒ.	When we arrive, please call me., Please tell me when we get there.
下一个战是什么？	Xià yīge zhān shì shénme?	What is the next station?
你下吗？	Nǐ xià4 ma?	Are you getting off?
加油！	Jiāyóu!	A term of encouragement telling people to give their full effort.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到，。	dào	to arrive
的	de	possessive particle
时候	shíhou	time
请	qǐng	please
叫	jiào	to call (somebody)
我	wǒ	I, me
下	xià	down, next, to get off
一	yī	one
个	ge	measure word
战	zhān	station
是	shì	to be
什么	shénme	what

QUICK TIP

Another way to know when to get off is to count stops while you are on the bus. Before you get on the bus, go to the sign for the bus route and count the number of stops between where you get on and where you have to get off. The problem with this is you have to know the Chinese characters for the stop you want to get off at. It also requires a fair amount of concentration when you are on the bus. We most highly recommend the first phrase from today's lesson; as Michael said, it's never failed him, but we also understand that it requires a certain level of Chinese skill and trust in other people.

Also, when you do know the next stop is your stop, whether you were notified by the ticket seller, or you counted stops, or you're just familiar with the area, start moving towards the door to get off. This will make things a lot easier for both you and your fellow riders. There is nothing worse than people waiting till the last minute to decide they want to get off, then violently pushing their way through the crowd. It's much more humane to quietly switch with other people in advance. Just ask people ahead of you, "Nǐ xià4 ma?" (Literally "You get off?") If they say "Xià." ("Yes.") then wait behind them and follow them out when the bus stops. If they say "Bùxià." ("No.") then indicate with your hands that you'd like to switch places. They'll understand and be happy to accommodate, even if means tripping a little over other people's limbs. Tripping a little is better than catching a stray elbow in the ribs as people push by.

QUICK TIP 2

China is a very safe country. The risk of you getting intentionally physically harmed while you are in China is tiny. (Though crime rates are rising as the gap between rich and poor gets larger.) Your belongings, however, should not be considered safe. While you may never encounter any problems, and you shouldn't let it get in the way of you having a good time, it is a good idea to keep an eye on your wallet and other valuables. This is especially true in crowded areas like the bus. If you keep your wallet someplace other than your back pocket, you should be okay. Don't put valuables in the outside pockets of bags. Try to keep your bag in front of you so you can see what's going on. But again, don't let paranoia get the best of you, you're here to enjoy yourself, not play secret agent.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 24: Riding the Rails 1- Subway
地铁 dìtiě

LESSON NOTES

Traffic is killing China. For any kind of appointment you have it's okay to be late if you use the traffic excuse. "I'm sorry. We ran into traffic." Traffic is almost unavoidable. Unless you go underground. To combat it's traffic problems China is building more and more subways. Beijing has five new lines under construction that are supposed to be done before the 2008 Summer Olympics. The subway is often the quickest way to get anywhere in a crowded city. You just have to know how to use it.

We'll be going over the Beijing subway in this PDF because that's what Michael was most familiar with. (You can also find some information about the Shanghai subway in Quick Tip 2.) Subway systems differ from city to city so you may need a day or so to adjust to a new system. We hope that the phrases and information that we give you here will help ready you for anything you might face.

This first step in any subway journey is buying a ticket. Ticket booths are located in all subway stations in Beijing. Most ticket booths are underground right before the subway platforms, but a few stations have ticket booths at street level. In all subway stations, tickets are checked at an entrance very near the ticket booth. In Beijing, the tickets are divided by which line you are going to ride. There are three subway lines and one commuter train that goes out into the suburbs east of Beijing (the BaTong Line). The different subway lines all have different colors and numbers. The blue line, Line Two, makes a rectangle around the central part of the city following the second ring road. (This line is also called the Loop Line.) The red line, Line One, goes east to west, cutting through the blue line's rectangle near the bottom (in the south). At it's eastern-most end, the red line connects with the BaTong Line going out to the suburbs. The BaTong Line is also red, but don't be confused, Line One and the BaTong line are different lines. The BaTong Line requires a different ticket. Construction started on the two lines in central part of the city back in the 1960's. Originally they were much less extensive and only for official use. The two lines were fully completed and opened to the public in 1984. The BaTong Line was opened in 2003. Line 13, the yellow line, which operates in the northern part of the city, was opened in sections in 2002 and 2003. The yellow line goes above ground making a wide loop from the blue line's northwest corner to its northeast corner. (A map is included in this PDF.) All lines except the yellow line still use simple paper tickets. An attendant takes your ticket and rips it when you enter. Unless you have a transfer ticket, there is no reason for you to keep your ticket after it has been checked. The attendant will just throw it into a big bag of ripped tickets that they keep in front of them. A ticket on any one line costs three yuan. Tickets go up in price if you want to buy a transfer ticket to get you between two lines. Transferring between the red line and the blue line (the two subways in the center of the city) is free. Otherwise you need a transfer ticket.

(There will be many times in this PDF that "the subway" just refers to the red and blue lines. We are sorry if this causes any confusion. We do it for convenience. Technically the red and blue lines are subways whereas the other tines are not because they operate above ground. The Chinese word for "subway" is "dìtiě." "Dì" means "ground" and "tiě" means "iron." The Chinese are very strict about only using this word for subways, trains that are underground. There are other words for rail systems that go above ground like the yellow line and the BaTong Line. If you, however, use "dìtiě" for all these lines, no one will bat an eye.) A transfer ticket has two different colored ends. A transfer ticket for the subway and the yellow line has one yellow end and one blue end. A transfer ticket for the BaTong line and the subway has one red end and one blue end. When you go down to the subway platform the attendant will rip off the blue end and hand you back the rest of the ticket. Make sure not to forget your ticket. When you get to the another line an attendant will rip off the other end of your ticket at the entrance to the platform. If you lose your ticket you will have to buy a new one when you transfer. The yellow line no longer uses paper tickets. It has been upgraded to take tickets with magnetic coding on the back. These can be read by machines and so there does not need to be as many attendants checking tickets. Unfortunately, the transfer ticket for the subway and the yellow line is still paper. When you get to the entrance to the yellow line there is an attendant who will give you a magnetic ticket in exchange for the yellow end of your transfer ticket. You slip the magnetic ticket into a slot in the turnstile and little gates are automatically pulled back. Your ticket comes out at the other end of the machine. Make sure to take the magnetic ticket with you. The yellow line requires you to use it again when you want to come out at your destination.

As we said, one ticket on any line is three yuan. Transfer tickets are more expensive, but people buy them because they are cheaper than buying two individual tickets. A transfer ticket for the BaTong line and the subway costs four yuan. One for the yellow line and the subway costs five yuan. Because each of these tickets has a unique price, when Beijingers go to the ticket booth they almost never say which line they want a ticket for, they just say the price of the ticket. "Yīzhāng sānkuài de piào." means "One three yuan ticket." Saying you want a three yuan ticket tells the seller that you don't want a transfer ticket, you just want a ticket for whatever line you are currently on. Let's break down this phrase, then we'll talk about how to modify it for the other kinds of tickets. "Yī" means "one" and "zhāng" is a measure word for wide, thin, flat things. Most things that appear on a piece of paper, like tickets and magazine pages, use "zhāng" as their measure word. "Zhāng" can also be used for things like CDs or credit cards. (Though, again, you can always use "ge" if you forget the right measure word.) "Yīzhāng" together means "one (of something wide and flat)." The noun in this sentence is the last word, "piào." "Piào" means "ticket." "Yīzhāng piào" means "one ticket." "sānkuài de" modifies "piào." "Sān" means "three." "Kuài" is a word that has the same meaning as "yuan," but is used more commonly in speech (the same way that "dollar" is the formal word for the US currency, but "buck" might be used in speech). "De" is the possessive particle which connects these two words to the noun they are modifying, "piào." "Sānkuài de piào" means "three yuan ticket." The whole sentence together is "Yīzhāng sānkuài de piào." which means "One three yuan ticket." The word order is just like the English with the modifier coming in between the quantity and the noun. The only difference is the addition of a measure word and "de." Note that the measure word always stays with the number for the quantity.

If you want to change around parts of this sentence to talk about different tickets or a different quantity of tickets, you just change the numbers in the sentence. Nothing else in the sentence changes. To say "One four yuan ticket." you just say, "Yīzhāng sānkuài de piào." (A four yuan

ticket is a transfer ticket for the BaTong Line.) For "One five yuan ticket." you say, "Yīzhāng wǔkuài de piào." (Five yuan gets you a transfer ticket for the yellow line.) To get two five yuan tickets you just change the first number, you say, "Liǎngzhāng wǔkuài de piào." Isn't this simple?

One last little trick. You don't even need to say "piào." Beijingers usually don't say it. The ticket seller knows that you're buying a ticket, they don't need you to say the word. Plus the measure word that you use tips them off as to what you are talking about. (Remember, "zhāng" can only be used for wide, flat, thin things.) Beijingers often say, "Yīzhāng sānkuài de." which, in this situation, means "One three yuan ticket." In another situation it might not be clear what wide, flat thing that costs three yuan you are talking about. Note that everything about the sentence stays the same, only the word "piào" is left out. "De" has to stay to signal that "sānkuài" is modifying something, even though the thing that "sānkuài" is modifying is not said, only implied. One last example: "Two four yuan tickets." "Liǎngzhāng sìkuài de."

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
张	zhāng	measure word for wide, flat, thin things, in this case, tickets
块	kuài	word for the Chinese currency
的	de	possessive particle
票	piào	ticket
一卡通	yikǎtōng	
地铁	dìtiě	subway

QUICK TIP

In the past year (starting in 2006) Beijing has been introducing something called "Yīkǎtōng." This literally means "one card pass." It is a card that people can put money on and use on the subway or the bus. Riders just wave their card (or their wallet or bag with the card in it) in front of a special scanner and the machine automatically deducts money. This makes a lot of sense on the bus because it gets you a more than 50% discount on almost all bus rides. For the subway, having Yikatong saves you the time of buying a ticket, but it doesn't give you the transfer discounts that buying transfer tickets would. You get charged three yuan every time you enter a new line. Except for the yellow line, the subway system also still relies on attendants to check that people are using their cards and, of course, to rip paper tickets. (Apparently, the subways cannot be upgraded to automatic ticket checkers like the yellow line because their entrances are too small. They were built in the 60's, 70's, and 80's with deliberately small entrances to control crowds so that a few attendants could check everyone's tickets. Widening the entrances of all the subway stations would be a massive project and will certainly have to wait until after the Olympic Games.)

The Yīkǎtōng can be bought and charged up in any subway station and at major bus stations.

QUICK TIP 2

The subway system in Shanghai is different from Beijing's system. The Shanghai subway uses cards and ticket prices vary depending on how far you are going. Cards (including single-use cards) can be bought from machines or ticket booths in the subway. The machines have English menus, though some people find them confusing and sometimes they malfunction or are unresponsive. If you buy a card from the booth, you just need to tell them where you are going. Just use the phrase we learned for buying bus tickets: "Dào (the name of the station you want to go to)." They will respond by telling you how much you owe. You take the card the vendor gives you and you swipe it over the scanner at the turnstile. When you are leaving, if you have just bought a single-use card, you will need to insert your card into a slot in the turnstile before the machine will let you go.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 25: Riding the Rails 2 - Long distance travel

几张？Jǐzhāng?

LESSON NOTES

China is a big country. It is not like Japan, it is not like Europe. You can't just hop in a car or hop on a train and be anywhere in a few hours. Cities are hundreds and thousands of kilometers apart. Going around China is a journey, it is not just a little trip. The train is the way to get around China. It is the way Chinese people get around China and it is how you should go, too. Buses are cramped, they take at least as long as the train, and the price difference is not huge. Avoid buses unless you are going somewhere only a couple hours away, or you are in the mountains. (This is a big "or." Trains cannot scale steep inclines. In many mountainous parts of China, buses are the only way to go.) Avoid sleeper buses at all costs. Unless you are 160cm tall (about 5'2") and enjoy the smooth sounds of wailing babies lulling you to sleep, sleeper buses are a no-no. Driving a car probably won't be an option for you, and this is true for most Chinese people, too. Planes aren't too bad. They're much more expensive than the train, but they're also quicker. Thought domestic flights in China have an average a delay of two to five hours, they should still get you to your destination somewhat quicker than the train. Still, trains are China. The train is pretty comfortable, it's cheap, and you get a feel for China. Not only can you see China rolling away outside your window, but the train is also a lively social space. It's filled with people sitting on each other's bunks, families eating fruit, older men talking politics, students playing Chinese card games, and lots of people eating dried melon seeds and drinking beer. You can lie in your bunk, read a book, and stare out the window for a while. Then, when you feel ready, go to the bunks next to yours and watch the people play Chinese poker. They'll probably invite you and try to teach you the game. They'll at least want you to have a few beers.

But first you have to get on the train. And that means buying a ticket. (Unless you're really adventurous and sneaky.) With every train station there is a booth for selling tickets. In smaller train stations this booth is often inside the station, in the waiting area. Larger stations have the booth outside or in a separate section of the station so that people buying tickets don't crowd the waiting areas.

When you get to the front of the line the ticket vendor will ask you, "Dao4 na3r?" Buying tickets for the train is like buying tickets for the bus crossed with buying subway tickets, so this should feel like somewhat of a review of previous lessons. "Dào nǎr?" means "Where to?" (Remember? It's the same question the vendor in the bus asks.) "Dào" means "to arrive." "Nǎr" means "where." The question thus means "Where to?" You answer this by saying "Dao4 (the place you want to go to)." Michael used Beijing as his example. He's kind of in love with Beijing. Using Beijing, your answer would be "Dào Běijīng." ("To Beijing.") The next question the vendor asks is "Jǐzhāng?" This means "How many tickets?" "Jǐ" means "how many" and "zhāng" is a measure word for wide, flat, thin things; in this case, tickets. (Remember that from last lesson?) The

vendor doesn't need to actually say the word "tickets" ("piào") becauses from the context and the measure word we know what they are talking about when they ask "How many?" To this question you should answer "(The number of tickets you want) zhāng." Probably you will say, "Yīzhāng." ("One.") Though, if you are with friends you might say, "Liǎngzzhāng." ("Two.") or "Sānzhāng." ("Three.")

You could condense these two steps into one and bypass having to answer questions by just starting with, "(The number of tickets you want)zhāng1 dào (your destination) de piào." If you want one ticket to Beijing you say, "Yīzhāng dào Běijīng de piào." ("One ticket to Beijing.") This sentence takes the information in our previous answers and puts it into one sentence. As we mentioned before, "piào" means ticket. Everything else in the sentence modifies "piào." "Yīzhāng" ("one wide, flat, thin thing") tells them the quantity of tickets of tickets you want. "Dào Běijīng de" tells the vendor what kind of ticket you want. You want a ticket "to Beijing." "De" is the possessive particle. It attaches a modifier onto a noun. Here it attaches "dào Běijīng" ("to Beijing") to "piào" ("ticket"). The sentence is easy to manipulate no matter how many tickets you want and where ever you want to go. Just fill in the relevant information. Let's say you and your significant other want to go to Shanghai, you want to do some shopping, just say, "Liǎngzhāng dào Shànghǎi de piào." ("Two tickets to Shanghai.) Or maybe you've been staying up in Beijing, you've met some friends, and all of you want to get on south because your freezing up in Beijing. Then you might say, "Wǔzhāng dào Guǎngzhòu de piào." ("Five tickets to Guangzhou.")

The last thing you need to tell the vendor is what kind of ticket you want. In China, except on very short trips where there are no beds, all trains have three kinds of tickets. There is "yìngzuò," "yìngwò," and "ruǎnwò."

"Yìngzuò" means "hard seat." "Yìng" means "hard" and "zuò" means "seat." This kind of ticket quite literally gets you a hard seat. You get a seat in a car split off into tables. Each table has four to six plastic seats around it. These seats are generally a little small for the average Westerner. Sometimes the seats are padded, sometimes not. If there aren't too many people and you aren't riding for more than a few hours, these seats aren't so bad. If it's around a holiday, you're on a high volume line, or you just have bad luck, the aisles will be packed with bags and people who bought standing room only tickets.

"Yìngwò" means "hard sleeper." "Yìng" means "hard" and "wò" means "to lie." A hard sleeper ticket gets you one of three bunks in a bunk bed. An aisle runs down the side of the hard sleeper cars. On one side of the aisle are windows, on the other are openings to compartments with bunk beds in them. There are two sets of bunk beds to a compartment. The beds have thin mattress. (Thus the "hard" in "hard sleeper.") The compartments have no doors and the hard sleeper cars tend to be very lively. People sit on each other's bunks, move from compartment to compartment, play cards, talk, eat, and drink. Hard sleeper tickets are divided into "shàng," "zhōng," and "xià." These refer to which level on the bunk bed you get. "Shàng" means "top," "zhōng" means "middle," and "xià" means "bottom." The character for which bunk you have will be written on your ticket. People have long discussions about which bunk is best. The bunks all have different prices, but the price difference isn't very large. The top bunk is the smallest, you can't even sit up half way. There is only room to lie down. Everyone agrees that the top bunk is the worst. The only advantage is that the luggage compartment is up at the top. Thus being in the top bunk allows you to be near your luggage. The middle bunk is bigger than the top bunk, but there's still not enough room to sit up straight. The bottom bunk is the biggest, you can sit and really move around. The advantage of the middle bunk is privacy. People don't have many places they can sit when they're not lying in their bunk. The bottom bunks are places of congregation. If you have the bottom bunk people will be coming and sitting on your bed. Your

friends will come and sit on your bed. Complete strangers may sit on your bed without asking so that they can talk with their friend who has the bunk across from you. Or maybe they just want to start conversation. People will want to use your bed when they are eating or when they want to play cards. It is very hard to tell people they have to leave because you want to stretch out and read your book. And whenever anyone wants to go up to their bunk they have to step on yours first. In the middle bunk people will leave you alone. If you crawl up to your bunk to relax for a while, people probably won't say a word to you. But, again, the bottom bunk is way more comfortable and you don't have to feel bad about sitting on someone else's bed whenever you want to sit straight up.

"Ruǎnwò" means "soft sleeper." "Ruǎn" means "soft." Soft sleeper tickets are much more expensive than hard sleeper tickets. The soft sleeper car is laid out in much the same way as the hard sleeper car, except the compartments have doors. Maybe it's the doors, maybe its the extra money required to get into the soft sleeper car, but the soft sleeper cars are generally much more quiet than the hard sleeper cars. People don't move around, they don't congregate on each other's beds as much, they don't tend to make new friends. In addition to having doors on the compartments, the soft sleeper beds have much better mattresses and much more head room. Soft sleeper bunks only have two levels, "shàng" ("top") and "xià" ("bottom"). Both levels have plenty of room. The soft sleeper cars are much more comfortable than hard sleeper, but something of the chaotic beauty of China is missing.

That's it for the train. The rest you have to figure out and experience on your own. Oh, and by the way, before we end, "train" in Chinese is "huǒchē." Thought you might like to know. ("Huǒ" means "fire" and "chē" is that word that we said means anything with wheels that you can ride on.)

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
几张？	Jǐzhāng?	How many (wide, flat, thin things; in this case, tickets)?
硬座	yìngzuò	Hard seat.
硬卧	yìngwò	Hard sleeper.
软卧	ruǎnwò	Soft sleeper.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
火车	huǒchē	train
硬	yìng	hard
软	ruǎn	soft
卧	wò	to lie
上	shàng	top
中	zhōng	middle
下	xià	bottom

QUICK TIP

Most nice hotels have ticket offices in them, so you can probably buy your ticket at your hotel. This is really convenient and there is usually only a small service charge, but the people working at the ticket office are not guaranteed to speak English. The ticket offices are often run by companies separate from the hotel, so sometimes even when the desk clerks speak wonderful English, the people in the ticket office only really know "Hello."

QUICK TIP 2

Watch your bags, especially in train stations. Many people get worried about their bags when they are riding the train,particularly if its going to be an overnight trip. They don't like falling asleep with their bags vulnerable to all these strangers. This may be a reasonable fear, but, really, the most dangerous place for your belongings is in the train station. All Chinese people put their wallet in their front pocket when they go to the train station. They know thieves tend to gather in train stations to pick on unwary traveler. So keep an eye on your stuff when you're rushing to get that train. Then, relax. Once you're on the train, things are much safer. Everyone else is traveling just like you and your neighbors will look out for you.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 26: Taking a Taxi
到北京站。Dào Běijīng zhàn.

LESSON NOTES

Taxis are generally the main form of transportation for anyone traveling to China. Taxis all over China have recently raised their prices, but they're still reasonably cheap. In a recently published price comparison between Beijing taxis and taxis in the last 8 hosts of the Summer Olympic Games, Beijing taxis still came out cheaper than other Olympic cities by a large margin. Plus taxis are much less of a hassle than other forms of public transportation. You just have to know how to say where you want to go and you're all set.

The easiest, bare-bones way to give your directions is a phrase we've studied before. "Dào" plus your destination tells the cabbie where you want to go. "Dào" means "to arrive," but we can often translate it as simply "to." If you want to go to Beijing Station, you just say, "Dào Běijīng zhàn." This means "To Beijing Station." "Zhàn" means "station." All cities have a main train station that is called "(the name of the city) zhàn."

A slightly more elaborate way to tell the cabbie where to go is to say, "Wǒ xiǎng qù (your destination)." "Wǒ xiǎng qù" means "I want to go." "Wǒ" means "I" or "me," "xiǎng" means "to want to do something," and "qù" means "to go." Two pronunciation notes: First, because "Wǒ xiǎng" is two third tones in a row, remember to change the "wǒ" to a second tone. Second, "qù" is pronounced differently than "chù." English does not have a sound exactly like "qù." The difference between the two sounds does not sound very large to the Western ear, but it is discernible, and it is important. The easiest way to explain this sound is the way Michael pointed out in the lesson: you say the sound "chu" (like the beginning of "choose"), but with an exaggerated puckering of the lips, like you are going to kiss someone on the cheek. Say these sounds to yourself a couple times and try to feel out the difference. To complete this sentence all you have to do is add in your destination after "Wǒ xiǎng qù." We could use "Běijīng zhàn" again, but that would be boring. Let's try "Xīān zhàn." Xi'an is the ancient capital of China (the capital has moved a number of times). It is where the first emperor of China resided and was the capital for a good, long time. Xi'an is probably most famous for the Terra-cotta Warriors which were created to guard the first emperor's tomb. Xi'an is a huge tourist destination, and a great site for lovers of ancient culture, so you may find yourself there. "Xi1an1 zhàn" would be the name of the main train station in Xi'an. "Wǒ xiǎng qù Xīān zhàn." means "I want to go to Xi'an Station." This phrase is probably most useful outside of a cab. When you are taking a taxi, you can just use "Dc (your destination)." or you could just say where you want to go and leave off the "dào." But that is a very business-like phrase for a very special situation. Saying "Dào Běijīng zhàn." out of the blue to a friend doesn't have much meaning. (It tells them that something is going to Beijing Station.) You can use "wǒ xiǎng qù" in any kind of situation. If a friend asks you where in China you'd like to visit, you can say, "Wǒ xiǎng qù Xīān." ("I want to go to Xi'an.")

"Taxi" in Chinese is "chūzūchē" ("rent out car"). The act of taking a cab is generally called "dǎ chē" ("to hit car"). Hailing a cab in China is just like it is in any other part of the world. Just stand by the side of the road and raise your hand. Cabs have little red lights on the dashboard or next to the rear view mirror to tell you if they're looking for customers. You may also see "cab stops" that look like bus stops and have a big sign that says "taxi" on them. Those don't mean anything. Cabbies rarely wait at these cab stops. Often they just drive around, or they wait outside big hotels or night life spots. When a cabby stops, you get in first and then tell them where you're going. "Dǎ Xīān zhàn." you might say. If the cabbie understands, he or she will nod or make some other nominal response, flip down the red light, and start off. Flipping down the red light tells other people that they have a customer and it starts the meter. As Michael said, never allow the cabbie to not use the meter or take a cab without a meter. There are many unregistered taxis all over China. These cabs are called "hēi chē" ("black car"). While the people driving these unregistered cabs are not necessarily bad people, they are not responsible to anyone and are therefore a lot more dangerous. First, there is the greater chance of them trying to cheat you, either by giving you fake money or negotiating an unfair price ("hēi chē" have no meters, so prices are negotiated in advance). Second, they have no insurance. If you were to get into an accident, they have no obligation to help you, and, because they have no insurance, it is in their best interest to get away as soon as possible. Always take marked taxis and always rely on the meter. Never allow a cabbie to try to negotiate a price with you before hand. Why would they negotiate in advance unless it worked out in their favor?

That all being said, the great majority of cabbies are honest, nice people. Cabbies in Beijing and Shanghai have been getting some basic English tutelage in preparation for the Olympic Games and the World Expo (to be held in Shanghai in 2010). Many cabbies will be excited to try out their new English on you. Their English is extremely basic, not more than a few phrases, but, with a few phrases from them and a few from you, you can pass the time together pleasantly.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到北京站。	Dào Běijīng zhàn.	To Beijing station.
我想去西安站。	Wǒ xiǎng qù Xīān zhàn.	I want to go to Xi'an Station.
出租车	chūzūchē	to rent a car
打车	dǎ chē	to get a cab

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
到	dào	to
北京	Běijīng	Beijing, Peking
站	zhàn	station
我	wǒ	I, me
想	xiǎng	to want
去	qù	to go
十五	shíwǔ	15
五十	wǔshí	50

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
元	yuán	basic unit of Chinese currency
块	kuai	spoken word for yuan

QUICK TIP

Get a card for your hotel. For most foreigners, the hardest part of learning Chinese is the pronunciation. (Well, aside from the characters, that is.) There is no guarantee that cabbies will understand your pronunciation of the place you want to go to, especially if it's the name of a hotel and not a major tourist destination. Always be sure to bring a card from your hotel with you when you go out. That way, when you want to go back home, if all else fails, you can just give the cabbie the card and he or she will know where to go.

Many nicer hotels have cards with the Chinese and the English for at least a few tourist destinations. These cards are very useful for the same reason we just talked about: if you can't communicate, you can always just use the card. In addition, you can get the concierge or desk clerks at your hotel to right down the name of any place you want to go to so that you can show the cabbie. It might be a good idea to have them write down all the places you might want to go, before you head out for the day.

QUICK TIP 2

Get a receipt and don't tip. Just as in a restaurant, tipping is unnecessary and frowned upon. Cabbies will think you made a mistake in counting your money if you try to give them more than what the meter says. Getting a receipt, on the other hand, is especially useful if you think you have been overcharged (perhaps the cabbie drove in circles for a while). You can take the receipt to the desk clerks in your hotel and they will be able to tell you if you've paid too much. If you have been overcharged, the desk clerk can call the taxi company and report the cabbie. Getting a refund is possible, but not always easy, and probably not worth it considering the amount of money at stake and the brevity of your time in China. But, again, while it's important to have your guard up in China (just as you should in most of the world), don't let that get in the way of you seeing and enjoying China. It is a pity that many tourists only get to see the money-hungry side of China. That is as much their own fault as it is China's. If you get outside the normal tourist spots and try to meet people who aren't trying to sell you things, you can see a very friendly and warm part of China. Chinese people are known for being "rèqíng" ("warm feeling") which means "welcoming." Often they are overly welcoming.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 27: Do You Have Power Converters?

你有变压器吗？Nǐ yǒu biànyāqì ma?

LESSON NOTES

Chinese wall sockets are deadly assassins of American and Japanese appliances. Electrical wiring in the US and Japan gives out 120 and 100 volts respectively. China uses 240 volts. (Most European countries use 230 volts, which is close enough to 240 that there usually isn't a problem. Though this doesn't mean you'll necessarily be able to plug you appliance into the wall. Different countries use different kinds of plugs. Check out http://www.kropla.com/china_power.htm for more information on Chinese sockets and sockets around the worl. And even if you don't have to worry about having your appliances fried, it's still probably beneficial to read through this section just to get the phrases.)

Plugging an American or Japanese appliance straight into a Chinese wall socket exposes the appliance to a current twice what it's been built to handle. We here at SurvivalPhrases.com are not electricians (as partially evidenced by the fact that we had to actually go through these experiences before understanding them at all). We can't tell you exactly what happens inside the appliance. All we know is that the outside gets a little warm, like the appliance has a fever, and it won't turn on; ever again. Your appliance is dead. Michael says he took his Palm Pilot to a Radio Shack near his house after coming back from China the first time. He told them he thought he needed a new battery. They asked him what happened and he explained about plugging the Palm Pilot into the wall in Beijing. They just laughed. "It's gone," they said.

The SurvivalPhrases.com team is a group of hardy explorers, tramping around treacherous regions to blaze trails for those that follow. We brave the pitfalls so that you may cross them with ease. (Let us live in our fantasy world. We know we're just dumb foreigners, but it feels nice to pretend.) So what have we learned from our excursions in Chinese electricity? That you need power converters if you are going to use foreign appliances in China. And it seems that these little things, the ones we don't normally use in everyday life, are the things we always forget. There you are, in China, surrounded by hostile wall sockets waiting with baited breath for tasty appliance snacks, with not a single power converter to protect them. You need to get out and buy one post haste!

Unfortunately, power converters are hard to find in China. Some people just buy Chinese appliances or get along without the one's they've brought. (It will be a lot easier to buy normal razors than to find an adaptor for your electric one.) If you really need to use a certain appliance then you'll have to find a store that sells power converters. Perhaps the concierge in your hotel knows where to look, but odds are they just have some ideas about where you could look.

Once you find a store that looks like a likely candidate you'll have to bring out today's phrase. "Nǐ yǒu... ma?" means "Do you have...?" "Nǐ" means "you." "Yǒu" means "to have." "Ma" is a particle which changes statements into questions. It works like question mark. Actually, it is not necessary to use "nǐ" in this sentence, because it is generally understood that you are talking about the store you are in (or the person you are talking to) and not some other place. If you do use the "nǐ" remember to change it to a second tone because it precedes third tone. "Do you have power converters?" would be "Nǐ yǒu biànyāqì ma?" "Biànyāqì" means "power converter." "Biàn" means "change," "yā" means "stress," and "qì" means "device." The word for "power converter" literally means "change stress device," which makes sense when you think about what a power converter does. Altogether, the phrase is literally "You have power converters?" ("Nǐ yǒu biànyāqì ma?")

If you want to ask about anything else in a store, just replace the noun in the phrase. "Do you have dictionaries?" would be "Nǐ yǒu cídiǎn ma?" "Cídiǎn" means "dictionary." "Yǒu píjiǔ ma?" means "Do you have beer?" "Píjiǔ" is "beer." (Note that getting rid of the "nǐ" doesn't effect the meaning of the sentence.) "Yǒu yān ma?" means "Do you have cigarettes?" "Yān" means "cigarettes." These are the essentials for China: dictionaries, beer, and cigarettes. Yes, smoking is an awful habit, but let's just see how long you last in China without having a cigarette. (See Quick Tip 1.)

The answer to any of these questions will either be "Yǒu." or "Méiyǒu." "Yǒu." means "We have it." and "Méiyǒu." means "We don't have it." "Méi" means "no" or "not." The answer to the three questions mentioned in the last paragraph will almost certainly be "Yǒu." The Chinese also view these things as essential. But the Chinese don't need power converters. Perhaps this is why the answer to the power converter question is almost always "Méiyǒu."

When you get the answer "Méiyǒu." (the head honcho here at SurvivalPhrases.com had to go to at least five different stores before he could find power converters) the next question you're going to ask is "Where can I buy power converters?" The answer to this question will probably be "Bù zhīdao." ("Don't know." "Bù" means "no" and "zhīdao" means "to know.") Again, Chinese people don't use power converters ever, so they have no reason to know where one could find them. Still, you'll need to learn that question, "Where can I buy...?" if you're to have any hope of finding what you're looking for in China. That'll be the next lesson. See you next time.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
你有变压器吗？	Nǐ yǒu biànyāqì ma?	Do you have power converters?
你有词典吗？	Nǐ yǒu cídiǎn ma?	Do you have electric dictionaries?
有。	Yǒu.	Yes, we have them.
没有。	Méiyǒu.	No, we don't have them.
不知道。	Bù zhīdao.	I don't know.
我不抽烟。	Wǒ bù chōuyān.	I don't smoke cigarettes.
我吃了。	Wǒ chī le.	I ate.
我没有吃。	Wǒ méiyǒu chī.	I haven't eaten.
我没吃。	Wǒ méichī.	I haven't eaten.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
变压器	biànyāqì	power converter
词典	cídiǎn	dictionary
啤酒	píjiǔ	beer
烟	yān	cigarettes
没	méi	no, not, no (past tense)
不	bù	no, not
知道	zhīdao	to know
抽烟	chōuyān	to smoke cigarettes

QUICK TIP

"Chōuyān" means "to smoke cigarettes." "Wǒ bù chōuyān." means "I don't smoke cigarettes." But if it's a man that is saying this, it is usually interpreted by other men as meaning "I don't feel like smoking right now." Almost every Chinese man smokes sometimes. (Many, many women also smoke, but it is still less common for women.) Perhaps some men only smoke when they are drinking or when they are with other men, but they do smoke sometimes. The idea that one is constitutionally opposed to cigarettes is very uncommon, especially in the less Westernized areas away from cities. It seems that the belief that one should not smoke any cigarettes follows the penetration of Western culture (though some members of the Muslim minority in the Northwest view smoking as against their religion.) Many Chinese men view cigarettes in the same light that they view alcohol: every man likes cigarettes, they think; yes there are some times when one doesn't smoke, but to never smoke is unmanly. Many men will try to force cigarettes on other men as a sign of friendship (especially if they are a little drunk). They won't accept "I don't smoke." for an answer. "Come on, we're friends. Take the cigarette." Again, they believe you are saying that you don't feel like smoking right now. They just want you to share some cigarettes together, to bond, the same way that coworkers might want you to come with them after work for a couple beers. Come on, everyone likes cigarettes. Repeated refusal of their offer will get them to stop, but they may still think it's kind of strange that you don't want to have cigarettes with them. They might think it means that you don't want to be friends. (There are many people, especially the more Westernized, i.e. the young or the rich, that understand that some people just do not smoke.)

QUICK TIP 2

We said in this lesson that "méi" means "no" or "not." "Méi" is only used in certain situations and is connected with "yǒu." When you are negating "yǒu" you always use "méi." You cannot say "bù yǒu." When you are negating verbs in the past tense you put "méiyǒu" in front of the verb. "Wǒ méiyǒu chī." means "I have not eaten." or "I did not eat." Most of the time, however, people cut out the "yǒu," they just say "Wǒ méichī." In this sense we can say that "méi" is still always connected to "yǒu," but we have just left the "yǒu" out. Because you can leave the "yǒu" out when negating verbs in the past tense, many people say that "méi" is the past tense "no." Thus if you want to negate a verb in the past tense all you have to do is put "méi" in front of the verb.

(If the sentence were affirmative, "Wǒ chī le." "I have eaten." or "I did eat." we would add a "le" to indicate the past tense. Since "méi" itself indicates the past tense we do not use "le" with "méi." That would be redundant.)

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 28: Where Are the Power Converters?
在哪儿可以买变压器？Zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi biànyāqì?

LESSON NOTES

You can use this lesson's phrase "Zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi biànyāqì?" to ask where you can buy all manner of things. It just so happened that this phrase fit well with the lesson about power converters, so the bosses decided we should run with it. Before we explore how to change this phrase up, lets look at the components that make up the phrase. The most basic part of the phrase comes at the end: "mǎi" plus a noun. In this case the noun is "biànyāqì." (We said in the last lesson that "biànyāqì" means "power converter".) "Mǎi" means "to buy" and it is used in almost the same way as the English verb. You are probably noticing by now that Chinese word order often mirrors English. To talk about buying something you just place the something that you are going to buy after "mai3". Here the phrase is "mǎi biànyāqì." Together this means "to buy power converter(s)."

Before "mǎi biànyāqì" we have placed the verb "kěyǐ." "Kěyǐ" means "to be able to." Specifically, "kěyǐ" means "to have permission to" or "to be allowed to." It is very similar to the English "may" (as in "May I have some cookies?"), but it is still often used by Chinese people in spots English speakers would use the word "can," indicating the ability to do something. You can combine "kěyǐ" with any other verb there is, limited only by common sense. Just place "kěyǐ" in front of the verb it is modifying. Read altogether, our phrase "kěyǐ mǎi biànyāqì" means "to be able to buy power converter(s)."

The last component of this phrase is "zài nǎr." Together these words are used to ask "where." Literally, "zài" means "at." "Nǎr" is a combination of two characters: "nǎ" and "er." ("Er" has no tone.) "Nǎ" by itself means "which". When you add "er" it becomes "where." Together "zài nǎr" means "at where." It is usually translated into English as just plain "where." In Chinese, the location of an action is put in front of the verb. Thus we add "zài nǎr" onto the beginning of the phrase we already had to get our full phrase: "Zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi biànyāqì?" Literally, this means "At where can buy power converter(s)?" but we translate it as simply "Where can I buy power converters?"

Two things to note: 1. There is no subject in this phrase. In Chinese it is not necessary to say the subject of a sentence when the subject is clear from the situation or when the subject doesn't effect the meaning of the sentence. When you ask the question "Zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi biànyāqì?" the subject is irrelevant to the meaning of the question. In English you could say "Where can I buy power converters?" or "Where can one buy power converters?" Changing the subject doesn't change the meaning at all. In Chinese you just eliminate the subject.

2. In this sentence you have four third tones in a row. Third tones are tricky to string together and thus we use a rule that stipulates that with any two third tones in a row the first third tone is changed to a second tone. In this case, having four third tones in a row, we change the first and third third tones into second tones. This is done just to make the phrase easier to say. The final phrase is thus pronounced: "Zài nár kěyí măi biànyāqì?" (Though the phrase is pronounced this way, it is still written with the third tones unchanged.)

If you are looking for something else, you can freely change the object in the phrase "Zài năr kěyi3 măi biànyāqì?" Just replace the noun "biànyāqì" with the word for anything else you'd like to buy. In the lesson we used the noun "diànhuà kă." This means "telephone card." "Diànhuà" can be broken up into two separate characters: "diàn" means "electricity" and "huà" means "speech." Together these characters mean "telephone." "Kă" is one of a collection of Chinese words that are taken from English and thus sound somewhat like English. "Kă" means "card." Together we get "phone card." Just insert "diànhuà kă" in the place of "biànyāqì." The whole phrase is now "Zài năr kěyĭ măi diànhuà kă?" ("Where can I buy phone cards?") There is no need to change anything else about the phrase.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
在哪儿可以买变压器？	Zài năr kěyĭ măi biànyāqì?	Where can I buy power converters?
在哪儿可以买电话卡？	Zài năr kěyĭ măi diànhuàkă?	Where can I buy phone cards?

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
在	zài	at
哪儿	năr	where
可以	kěyĭ	to be allowed to, to be able to
买	măi	to buy
变压器	biànyāqì	power converter
电话卡	diànhuàkă	telephone card

QUICK TIP

There are many different types of phone cards in China, but the word "diànhuà kă" only refers to two types. There are local calling cards, international calling cards, and cards for the pay phone. In addition, all Chinese cell phone plans are paid for by buying cards worth a certain amount of money. You put money on your phone by calling an automated service and entering in the PIN number on the card. This last type of card, the one for charging up a cell phone, is not considered a phone card, it is called "chōngzhí kă." (Literally, "charge value card.")

The word "diànhuà kă" refers to the first two types of cards, cards that can be used in any normal phone to get cheap rates on long distance calls. (The local cards are used for long distance calls within China.) These telephone cards are also called "IP kă." They cannot be used on pay phones. (More about pay phones in the next tip.) In Beijing and most other places these are

usually sold at magazine stands that you can often see along the street. (These stands also usually sell chōngzhí kǎ and drinks.) To buy a card, go to the stand and use the phrase we learned in the last lesson changing out "biànyāqì" for "diànhuà kǎ": "Yǒu dinhuà kǎ ma?" ("Do you have telephone cards?") If they don't, they will say "Mei2yǒu." ("We don't have them.") (This is all review of the last lesson, you can go back and check it out for a better overview of this phrase.) If they do, they will say "Yǒu." ("We have them.") Then they will probably ask, "Shénme yàng de diànhuà kǎ?" ("What kind of telephone card?") To this you respond using the vocabulary from today's lesson: either "Guónèi" ("Local.") or "Guójì." ("International.") (You could skip this step by saying "Nǐ you3 guójì/guónèi diànhuàkǎ ma?" as your first question.) Their next question will be: "Nǐ yào duōshǎo qián de?" ("What price card do you want?") Tell the vendor how much money you want on your card. Just like in most Western countries, calling cards come with a certain amount of money on them that is used up as you talk. Give the vendor the right amount of money, take the card home, dial the phone number on the back, then enter the PIN when asked for it. You can talk as long as the card still has money on it.

QUICK TIP 2

There are two types of pay phones in China: phones on the street that use IC cards and phones in stores.

You will recognize the phone booths on the streets. They are generally orange pod-like structures raised on steel poles around a phone on the inside. Sometimes there are enclosed glass phone booths. These pay phones take cards called "IC kǎ" that come with a certain amount of money on them when you buy them. (The term "IC card" means the card has a little magnetic chip in it.) You insert your card into a slot on the phone and dial the number you want. Unfortunately, buying IC cards is a lot more complicated than using them. Possibly because of the prevalence of cell phones and stores with phones in them, less and less people are using the public phones on the streets. In most cities then, IC cards are only sold at special stores that often also sell cell phones and their accessories. If you want an IC card, you're really going to have to work this lesson's phrase (with "IC kǎ" inserted, of course): "Zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi IC kǎ?"

The second type of public telephone, a phone in a store, is much more convenient; though the last time Michael was in Shanghai he says he didn't see very many of these. Many convenience stores, cigarette shops, and even magazine stands have red or yellow phones sitting out for public use. Some places even have signs advertising a public telephone. Go into the shop, point to the phone, and say "Kěyǐ yòng ma?" ("Can I use it?") Then just use the phone like a regular phone. At the end of the call the phone will announce from a small speaker how much the call cost. Most of these phones are .3 RMB per minute. Don't, however, use these phones to call home. International calls will be at least 1 USD per minute. This is why we have told you how to buy an international phone card.

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 29: Where Is the Convenience Store?
便利店在哪儿？Biànlìdiàn zài nǎr?

LESSON NOTES

Aaahhh... The ever-present penetration of Western culture. China, like everywhere else in the world, is rife with convenience stores, but the presence of these stores follows the very sharp divide between rural and urban life. In big cities the nearest convenience store is often no more than a block away; and many of these stores are open all night. Life in the countryside is much different. In truly rural communities there is no such thing as a convenience store. There are shops in town, and some of them carry the same wares as a convenience store, but no one would call riding over dirt roads to town convenient; and because all the customers have to travel from their farms, the stores usually close early. There might be a hospital or pharmacy in town that stays open late, perhaps some customers are drinking at the restaurant, but good luck finding toothpaste. That's just something you'll have to wait until the morning for. Though we doubt you'll find yourself milling around rural China all alone.

These rural communities are still very common in China. In the past couple decades there has been a great migration to the cities, but census takers still estimate that more than half the population lives in the countryside. Many other people are migrant workers. They are from the countryside, their children live there, their parents live there, but they go off to the cities to work, usually in factories or doing construction. Some of these migrant workers are only gone for part of the year. During harvest and planting seasons they go home and help on the land. Others get to come home for a couple weeks during Chinese New Year, but the rest of the year they work six or seven days a week. Some leave for years at a time.

The experiences of migrant workers vary greatly. Many, probably most, are happy with their working conditions. It is very hard work, but they are glad to have the chance to support their families, especially considering farming seems to get less and less economically viable. But some migrants come back with blank eyes and creased, still faces. Many migrant workers are cheated out of their money and forced to work under impossible conditions: in the snow, in extreme heat, down under the ground. Generally it is those in construction or mining that fare the worst. They are often cheated because they have no contract and often their work is technically illegal.

Perhaps you should think about seeing rural China. Parts of it are beautiful. Parts of it are cheerful and laid back. Parts of it are just dreary. It's worth seeing, if only to be able to rebut people when they say, "You don't know what rural China is like." (Which some Chinese people might say to you.)

And when you're in the city looking for toothpaste, be thankful for the convenience stores.

Today's phrase works on the structure "zài nǎr?" We went over this in the last lesson when we said, "zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi...?" "Zài" means "at" and "nǎr" means "where." In Chinese "zài" designates what follows it as a location. "Zài" must be always be placed in front of any location.

If you place a noun before "zài nǎr?" you get a question asking where that noun is located. "Biànlìdiàn" means "convenience store." "Biànlì" means "convenient" and "diàn" means "store." "Biànlìdiàn zài nǎr?" means "Where is a convenience store?" It is unnecessary to specify a convenience store. It will just be assumed that you only want one convenience store. If you were looking for two convenience stores then you would have to specify that (because that's just weird).

We can switch out the noun if we're looking for something else or if we want to be more specific. "Èrshísì ge xiǎoshí diàn" is "24 hour store." "Èrshísì" is "24." "Ge" is that universal measure word we talked about before and just happens to be the one you use with hours. "Xiǎoshí" can be broken up into two words: "xiǎo" meaning small, and "shí" meaning "time." Together, "xiǎoshí" means "hour." "Diàn" is "store." Altogether we get "24 hour store." If you place this at the beginning of the sentence you have "Èrshísì ge xiǎoshí diàn zài nǎr?" which means "Where is a 24 hour store?" This is the phrase you want when you are wandering around at two in the morning jet-lagged and looking for toothpaste (or perhaps a nightcap).

You can plug any other noun into this phrase and it still works in exactly the same way. In the lesson we used "Běijīng zhàn zài nǎr?" (You remember by now. "Běijīng zhàn" means "Beijing station.") This sentence means "Where is Beijing station?"

Once you're in a store you can use today's phrase to ask where certain products are. Michael said "Shǔi zài nǎr?" ("Where is the water?") And how about the example we've been mentioning all throughout this write up: "Yágāo zài nǎr?" ("Where is the toothpaste?" "Yá" means "tooth" and "gāo" means "paste" or "cream.") At this point you don't need us teaching you so much as you need a good dictionary to take with you on trips to the store.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
便利店在哪儿？	Biànlìdiàn zài nǎr?	Where is a convenience store?
二十四小时点在哪儿？	Ershísì xiǎoshí diàn zài nǎr?	Where is a 24 hour store?
牙膏在哪儿？	Yágāo zài nǎr?	Where is the toothpaste?
药店在哪里？	Yàodiàn zài nǎlǐ?	Where is a pharmacy?

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
在	zài	at
哪儿	nǎr	where
便利店	biànlìdiàn	convenience store
二十四小时点	èrshísì xiǎoshí diàn	24-hour store
水	shǔi	water
牙膏	yágāo	toothpaste

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
这儿	zhèr	here
那儿	nàr	there
哪里	nǎlǐ	where
这里	zhèlǐ	here
那里	nàlǐ	there
商店	shāngdiàn	store
书店	shūdiàn	bookstore
药店	yàodiàn	pharmacy

QUICK TIP

Some people consider "nǎr" to be Beijing dialect. It's hard sometimes to differentiate between Beijing dialect and standard Mandarin. Mandarin was originally based off of the Beijing dialect and the Chinese still say that the Beijing dialect is the most "standard." (It is a high compliment to be told your Chinese is very "standard." "Standard" is meant more in the sense of "exemplary" than "common.") But there is still a Beijing dialect with a lot of slang which is distinct from standard Mandarin. Thus it is sometimes important to clarify what is and isn't standard Mandarin.

"Nǎr" is right on the edge of this line. Adding an "er" to the end of words is a common feature in the Beijing dialect. "Nǎr" is said more often in Beijing than in other places. But it is used other places as well. "Nār" is also taught in textbooks in the West and everyone in China understands it even if they don't say it themselves.

So if you don't say "nār," what do you say? Many people use "nālǐ" instead. It still means "where," it is just a different way of saying it. "Lǐ" means "in." This change is also done for "zhèr" ("here") and "nàr" ("there"). They become "zhèlǐ" and "nàlǐ." This is probably one of the largest differences in word use between the Northeast and the rest of the country.

QUICK TIP 2

In this lesson we said "diàn" means "store." Generally if you're just saying "store" (and not "convenience store" or some other kind of store) you put "shāng" in front of "diàn" and say "shāngdiàn." "Shāng" means "trade" or "business." "Shāngdiàn" just means "store."

If you want to talk about a certain kind of store, however, there is an easy way to do that. Just put a product in front of "diàn" and that means a store that sells that product. "Bookstore" is "shūdiàn." ("Shū" means "book.") "Pharmacy" is "yàodiàn." ("Yào" means "medicine.") Sometimes doing this doesn't give you the name that everyone uses for that kind of store, but it gets your point across just fine. It's like saying "hat shop" when you should say "haberdashery." (You say "haberdashery," don't you?)

SurvivalPhrases.com
A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Lesson 30: Directions
往前走。Wǎng qián zǒu.

LESSON NOTES

We taught you how to ask "Where is...?" but how do you understand the answer to this question? How often have you been in a country where you have only the most tenuous grip on the language; enough to ask a few basic questions, but not enough to understand the answers? One well-worn and well-respected approach to getting directions is to just follow hand signals. In the end, this forms the base of everyone's ability to get directions. When navigating around a city it's often enough to keep asking again every hundred feet and following another pointing finger. But wouldn't it be nice to know exactly where it's that you have to turn left? To not have to ask twice or three times on the way to a particularly distant bathroom? Today we're working on that skill. Hopefully we can help make you a little more directed in your wanderings and a little more certain that you're going to find what you're looking for.

First, let's go over "Go straight." In Chinese, this is "Wǎng qián zǒu." "Wǎng" means "towards." "Qián" means "front" or "forward." "Zǒu" means "to walk" or "to go." Literally, we have "Towards forward go." In Chinese you have to put the direction before the verb, and that direction must be designated as such by placing a word that means "towards" before it. We will see this pattern repeat itself a couple times in today's lesson. The order is "towards direction verb." Thus our sentence is "Wǎng qián zǒu." which means "Go straight."

For "Turn left." we take the same pattern as before and just change the direction and verb. "Wǎng zuó zhuǎn." means "Turn left." We just went over "wǎng." "Zuó" means "left" and "zhuǎn" means "to turn." The phrase is literally "Towards left turn." Note that the pattern never changes.

"Turn right." is the same as "Turn left." You just replace "left" with "right." "Right" in Chinese is "yòu." The phrase is "Wǎng yòu zhuǎn."

If you're navigating a city, intersections become the main landmarks by which one moves around. "Intersection" in Chinese is "shízì lùkǒu." This literally means "ten character road opening" or "road opening that looks like the character for ten." "Shí" means "ten." "Zì" means "character." "Lù" means "road." "Kǒu" means "mouth" or "opening." The character "shí" is written as a cross and thus has the same shape as a four way intersection. This is why a four-way intersection is called "road opening that looks like the character for ten."

The point of knowing how to say "intersection" is so that you can know where to turn (or, in the case of riding a cab, tell somebody else where to turn). The way you say this is "Zài shízì lùkǒu wǎng zuó/yòu zhuǎn." This means "Turn left/right at the intersection." We've gone over "zài"

before. "Zài" means "at," it says where something is or where an action is taking place. Our sentence is literally "At intersection towards left/right turn." Locations in Chinese always precede the verb (with a few exceptions) and they also precede the direction.

In the word for "intersection" we said that "lùkǒu" means "road opening." This word by itself can be used for the place where a road comes off another road. If you are going down a main street and there is a smaller street that opens up on the left, where that small street hits the big road is called the "lùkǒu." If you are coming out of a small residential area onto a big street, someone giving you directions could say, "Zài lùkǒu wǎng yòu zhuǎn." ("Turn right at the road opening.") Or if you are riding a taxi and you see the little street that your friend's house is on, you can say to the driver, "Nà ge lùkǒu! Nà ge lùkǒu!" ("That road opening! That road opening!" By the way, if anyone can think of a good way to translate "lùkǒu," please post it on our site. We're very interested.)

One last phrase for use in the taxi, "Zhèr jiù xíng." This mean's "Here is fine." It's a phrase to tell the cabbie that they can let you off here. "Zhèr" means "here" and "xíng" mean "fine" or "okay." "Jiù" very hard to translate into English. Sometimes it's translated as "exactly" or "just." It often connects two clauses in a sentence to show a close relation between the second and the first. Here we can think of it as "exactly" or as two things, it connects the "zhèr" and the "xíng" showing that "here" is "just fine." You can also choose not to think about "jiù" at all. "Jiù" is one of those words whose meaning and usage mostly just require acclimation and familiarity with the language. It's not something that we can really explain, it's more something that you have to learn to feel.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
往前走。	Wǎng qián zǒu.	Go straight.
往左转。	Wǎng zuó zhuǎn.	Turn left.
往右转。	Wǎng yòu zhuǎn.	Turn right.
在路口往右转。	Zài lùkǒu wǎng yòu zhuǎn.	Turn right at the road opening.
在第四个十字路口往左转。	Zài dìsì ge shízì lùkǒu wǎng zuó zhuǎn.	Turn left at the fourth intersection.
这儿就行。	Zhèr jiù xíng.	Here is fine.

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
往	wǎng	towards
前	qián	front, forward
走	zǒu	to walk, to go
左	zuó	left
右	yòu	right
转	zhuǎn	to turn
十字路口	shízì lùkǒu	intersection
路口	lùkǒu	road opening
在	zài	at

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
这儿	zhèr	here
就	jiù	just, exactly, indicates close connection between two clauses
行	xíng	okay, fine
第	dì	makes numbers into ordinal numbers

QUICK TIP

If you are getting directions and somebody tells you to turn at an intersection, often it's not the next intersection, but rather the second or third intersection down the road. Wouldn't it be nice, then, to know how to say ordinal numbers in Chinese? (Ordinal numbers are numbers like "first" and "second," as opposed to "one" and "two.") In Chinese it is very simple to make a normal number into an ordinal number. Just place "dì" in front of the number. That's it. "First" is "dìyī." "Second" is "dìèr." "22nd" is "dìèrshíèr." And so on.

When you use ordinal numbers in front of nouns you need to use a measure word (usually "ge"). Thus "the second intersection" would be "dièr ge shízìlùkǒu." When using these in a sentence, the ordinal number gets treated as if it were part of the noun. The sentence "Turn left at the third intersection." would thus be "Zài dìsān ge shízì lùkǒu wǎng zuó zhuǎn." Now you can give and receive much more detailed directions.

QUICK TIP 2

Remember the name of the bridge or a landmark near where you are staying and learn how to get home from there. Much of the navigation in Chinese cities is done by reference to landmarks. Street names in many cities will change every few blocks so they can refer to a nearby landmark. Taking an example from Beijing, there is a big street which is called "Inner East Gate Avenue" ("Dōngzhíménnèi dàjiē") where it intersects with a place called "East Gate" ("Dōngzhímén"); but after a couple blocks, once it is a little far away from "East Gate," it becomes "Thru-street Opening Avenue" ("Jiāodàokǒu dàjiē," sorry, that's an awful translation); and then in another block or two it becomes "Drum Tower Avenue" ("Gǔlóu dàjiē"). During this change the street has been going perfectly straight. The only thing that has changed is its proximity to certain well-known landmarks. In China it is not the streets that are important (their names change at the drop of a hat), but the landmarks around them. Most cab drivers would know the big street we just mentioned (it is a huge street and right in the middle of the city), but that will not be true for smaller streets or those in the outer parts of the city. Thus, knowing landmarks is vital. In the old parts of a city the landmarks are historic sites: gates, towers, squares, even places like the aforementioned "Thru-street Opening" (a very old intersection and marketplace). In newer parts of the city, bridges serve as landmarks. Often what is called a bridge in Chinese is really just an overpass, a place where large roads intersect. In the city, large roads have a bridge every kilometer or so. Thus if you memorize the name of the bridge near where you are staying, you can always get within one kilometer of home. Then you can use the directions we learned today to guide the cabbie.

(Note: Streets in Shanghai often keep the same name over a longer distance than in other cities because much of the city was built recently and by foreigners. Still, many parts of Shanghai are filled with tiny streets and many cab drivers still navigate by landmark.)

SurvivalPhrases.com

A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!

Survival Phrases - Chinese (Part 1 end)

Hold on! You may be missing out!

Learn more Chinese at ChineseClass101.com for FREE!

Get your FREE Lifetime Account at

www.ChineseClass101.com/survival1 now!

Learn twice as much, twice as fast with Survival

Phrases - Chinese and ChineseClass101.com together!

In fact, most people who learn with Survival

Phrases - Chinese become members of ChineseClass101.com.

It's FREE to join, and you'll get a special ChineseClass101.com member only training guide: 10 Best Ways to Learn Chinese Fast.

So what are you waiting for?

Click here to get your FREE Lifetime Account in less than a minute!

More Survival Phrases - Chinese!

Continue on with Survival Phrases - Chinese (Part 2) Lessons 31-60 available now.

In Part 2 the following are just a few of the topics you'll master:

★ Taking a taxi without being taken advantage of

★ Getting around and asking directions and actually understanding the answer!

★ Learning Chinese using Chinese, and making lots of friends in the process

★ Making the most of a hotel stay, and exploring alternatives to the beaten path

★ Visiting the Post office and mailing thing home

★ Phone rentals and phone cards, don't travel without one!

★ Critical phrases for vegetarians and allergy suffers!

★ Talking to the doctor and explaining symptoms correctly

★ Getting the right medicine

★ Expressing yourself with adjectives and being understood

★ Home visits and proper protocol that will "wow" hosts

★ Getting help, this may be the most useful phrase you ever learn

Finally, thank you again!

If you have a story to share about how Survival Phrases - Chinese helped you with your travels, business, or personal relationships, we would love to hear about it!

Please e-mail us contactus@survivalphrases.com