



Absolute Beginner 1

Lessons 1-25

1-25

Introduction

This is Innovative Language Learning.

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The course consists of lessons centered on a practical, real-life conversation.

In each lesson, first, we'll introduce the background of the conversation.

Then, you'll hear the conversation two times:

One time at natural native speed and one time with the English translation.

After the conversation, you'll learn carefully selected vocabulary and key grammar concepts.

Next, you'll hear the conversation 1 time at natural native speed at the end of the lesson.

Finally, practice what you have learned with the review track. Repeat the words and phrases you hear in the review track aloud to practice pronunciation and reinforce what you have learned.

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Absolute Beginner S1

Meeting - What's Your Name?

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Simplified Chinese

- A 你好。
B 你好，你叫什么名字？
A 我叫张林。
B 我叫王小芳。

Traditional Chinese

- A 你好。
B 你好，你叫什麼名字？
A 我叫張林。
B 我叫王小芳。

Pinyin

- A Nǐhǎo.
B Nǐhǎo, nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?
A Wǒ jiào Zhāng Lín.
B Wǒ jiào Wáng Xiǎofāng.

English

- A Hello.
B Hello, what's your name?
A I'm Zhang Lin.
B I'm Wang Xiaofang.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
你好	你好	nǐhǎo	hello
你	你	nǐ	you
叫	叫	jiào	to call



什么	什麼	shénme	what
名字	名字	míngzi	name
我	我	wǒ	I, me

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

你好，我叫王国易。	Nihǎo, wǒ jiào Wáng Guóyì.	Hello, I'm Wang Guoyi.
是你吗？	Shì nǐ ma?	Is it you?
你说什么？	Nǐ shuō shénme?	What did you say?
我忘记他的名字。	Wǒ wàngjì tāde míngzi.	I forget his name.
我的朋友很帅。	Wǒ de péngyou hěn shuài.	My friend is really handsome.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Pronouns in Chinese

我叫张林。

"I'm Zhang Lin."

Here is a listing of pronouns in Chinese:

Chinese	"English"
我 (wǒ)	"I, me"
我们 (wǒmen)	"we, us"
你 (nǐ)	"you" - informal
你们 (nǐmen)	"you" - plural
您 (nín)	"you" - formal
他 (tā)	"he, him"
他们	"they, them"

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(tāmen)	
她 (tā)	"she, her"
她们 (tāmen)	"they, them"
它 (tā)	"it"

What Is Your Name?

In Chinese, as we heard in this lesson's dialogue, one way of asking a person their name is:

你叫什么名字?

Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?

"What is your name" (literally: "You called what name?")

The question word "what" in Chinese is 什么 (shénme).

Chinese Names

Chinese names are given surname first, and then given name. Generally, Chinese names are made up of two or three characters total (including the surname, which is generally just a single character). We see a couple examples of names in this lesson's dialogue.

For Example:

1. 張林

Zhāng Lín

(surname here is 張, given name is 林)

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王小芳

Wáng Xiǎofāng

(surname here is 王, given name is 小芳)

Chinese names are full of meaning and not all characters are suitable for a name. It is best to not attempt to choose one's own name in Chinese. Enlist the help of a Chinese friend so you don't end up with a name that will cause some raised eyebrows and snickers.





Absolute Beginner S1

Eating - Waiter, the Bill!

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Simplified Chinese

A 服务员，买单！
B 您好，十八元。
A 哇，真便宜！
B 十八块钱！

Traditional Chinese

A 服務員，買單！
B 您好，十八元。
A 哇，真便宜！
B 十八塊錢！

Pinyin

A Fúwùyuán, mǎidān!
B Nín hǎo, shíbā yuán.
A Wā, zhēn piányi!
B Shíbā kuài !

English

A Waiter, the bill!
B Hello. Eighteen RMB.
A Wow, so cheap!
B Eighteen RMB!

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
服务员	服務員	fúwùyuán	waiter
买单	買單	mǎidān	to bring the check (at a restaurant)

十八	十八	shíbā	eighteen
元	元	yuán	main denomination of the RMB
哇	哇	wā	wow
真	真	zhēn	really
便宜	便宜	piányi	inexpensive
块	块	kuài	(measure word for money)
钱	錢	qián	money

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

服务员，买单！

十八怎么样？

一共二十元。

Fúwùyuán, mǎidān!

Shíbā zěnmeyàng?

Yígòng èrshí yuán.

Waiter, the bill!

What about eighteen kuai?

All together, it's twenty RMB.

哇，好多事情啊。

今天真热。

便宜一点儿，可以吗？

Wā, hǎo duō shìqíng ā.

Jīntiān zhēn rè.

Piányi yīdiǎnr, kěyǐ ma?

Wow, so many things!

It's really hot today.

Can (you) make it a little cheaper?

这条裙子一百块钱。

16块钱。

Zhè tiáo qúnzi yī bǎi kuài qián.

Shí liù kuài qián.

This skirt is one hundred RMB.

Sixteen Renminbi.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Money Words

十八塊錢！

"Eighteen RMB!"

There are a few different ways to refer to the Chinese Renminbi in everyday speech.

1. 18元 (yuán) (more formal)
2. 18块钱 (kuài qián)
OR, for short:
3. 18块 (kuài)

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真 + (adjective)

真便宜! zhēn piányi! ("Really cheap!")

There are a few ways to intensify adjectives in Chinese. One way is using 真 + the adjective, as we saw in this lesson dialogue. You can also use:

1. 很便宜
hěn piányi
"very cheap"
2. 非常便宜
fēicháng piányi
"extremely cheap"

Measure Words

Measure words are a type of Chinese word we use to count or measure nouns. Most nouns in Chinese have one or more measure words associated with them. Similar nouns often use the same measure word. For example, zhī is the measure word for most animals: niǎo ("bird"), gǒu ("dog"), and māo ("cat") all use it.

English has some words, which are similar to Chinese measure words. For example, you can't say "a bread." Instead, you say "a slice of bread." The word "slice" functions the same way as Chinese measure words. You always use these words when you are enumerating an amount of something. We see an example of this in today's dialogue where it talks about an amount of money.

For Example:

18块钱 (18 kuài qián)

The measure word for "money" is 块 (kuài), as we see here. You can think of it as eighteen 'pieces' of money.

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Cultural Insight

Chinese Restaurants

You may find the culture of a Chinese restaurant quite different from what you are used to in your home country. Chinese restaurants are generally very noisy and boisterous. The service is different as well. In most cases, you have to call out to the waiter for service. So learn 服务员 (fúwùyuán), and be ready to call it out over the din, or you may be waiting longer than you anticipate for the waiter to appear.



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Lights, Camera, Chinese Fame!

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Simplified Chinese

- A 你是外国人吗?
B 对不起, 我听不懂。
A 哦, 你是外国人!
B 我听不懂。

Traditional Chinese

- A 你是外國人嗎?
B 對不起, 我聽不懂。
A 哦, 你是外國人!
B 我聽不懂。

Pinyin

- A Nǐ shì wàiguórén ma?
B Duìbuqǐ, wǒ tīngbùdǒng.
A Ō, nǐ shì wàiguórén!
B Wǒ tīngbùdǒng.

English

- A Are you a foreigner?
B I'm sorry, I don't understand.
A Oh, you are a foreigner!
B I don't understand.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
外国人	外國人	wàiguórén	foreigner
对不起	對不起	duìbùqǐ	sorry
听不懂	聽不懂	tīng bù dǒng	to not understand



哦	哦	ò	oh
是	是	shì	to be

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

这边外国人多。	Zhèbiān wàiguórén duō.	There are a lot of foreigners here.
对不起, 我很忙。	Duìbuqǐ, wǒ hěn máng.	Sorry, I'm very busy.
你说的话我听不懂。	Nǐ shuō de huà wǒ tīngbùdǒng.	I don't understand what you are saying.
哦, 没有洗手间!	ò, méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān.	Oh, there is no washroom!
我是加州人。	Wǒ shì Jiāzhōurén.	I am from California.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 听不懂 ("I don't understand")

我听不懂。

Wǒ tīngbùdǒng.

"I don't understand"

听不懂, tīngbùdǒng ("I don't understand")

Verb complements like the one here are special structures in Chinese that we use to indicate that it is or is not possible to reach a conclusion or result. To break it down, 听不懂 (tīngbùdǒng) literally means "hear not understand." You use this phrase in particular when you don't understand something that has been said.

On the flip side, if you do understand, you can use this phrase to let them know: 听得懂 (tīngdedǒng)

Cultural Insight

Breaking the Stereotype Barrier

China's foreign population is growing at a rapid pace. Enticed by economic opportunities, cultural, and travel opportunities, we find people from all over the world within China's borders. While this population is growing, it is still miniscule compared to the size of the native Chinese population. Outside of large urban centers such as Shanghai, and Beijing, the opportunity of seeing a foreign face is scant. If you travel to smaller cities and villages, you will probably draw stares from the locals. Don't be offended. You now have tasted what it is like to be a movie star, drawing attention wherever you go. In many cases, you may be the first foreigner that a Chinese person has ever seen. If this is the case, take advantage of the opportunity, and practice out your Chinese. The person may be very bewildered since what they know about foreigners comes from mass media and second hand stories. Take the chance to break stereotypes.



Absolute Beginner S1

The Great Chinese Potty Dilemma

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Simplified Chinese

- A 洗手间在哪儿?
B 没有洗手间。
A 没有洗手间?
B 没有。

Traditional Chinese

- A 洗手間在哪兒?
B 沒有洗手間。
A 沒有洗手間?
B 沒有。

Pinyin

- A Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?
B Méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān.
A Méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān?
B Méiyǒu.

English

- A Where is the bathroom?
B We don't have a bathroom.
A You don't have a bathroom?
B No, we don't.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
洗手间	洗手間	xǐshǒujiān	bathroom
在	在	zài	at
哪儿	哪兒	nǎr	where



没有	沒有	méiyǒu	to not have
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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

洗手间在那儿。	Xǐshǒujiān zài nàr.	The washroom is there.
他在后面。	Tā zài hòumiàn.	He is in the back.
你们去哪儿？	Nǐmen qù nǎr?	Where are you going?
我没有看过他。	Wǒ méiyǒu kàn guo tā.	I haven't seen him before.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 没有 ("to not have") and 哪儿 ("where")

洗手间在哪儿？

Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?

"Where is the bathroom?"

沒有洗手間。 , Méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān ("to not have")

Literally, "to not have." This is the negative form of the verb 有 (yǒu), which means "to have" when the subject is something that can have possession—people, things, places, etc.

The negation of the verb 有 (yǒu) is always 没有 (méiyǒu). It does not take 不 (bù) in its negative form like most other verbs.

哪儿, nǎr ("Where")

洗手间在哪儿？ Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr? ("Where is the bathroom?")

Unlike English, when asking the location of something, the "where" comes at the end of the question in Chinese. The 在 (zài) is a preposition meaning "at" or "in."

There are two ways of saying "where" in Chinese, depending on the region the speaker is from. One is as in our dialogue: 哪儿 (nǎr). The other is 哪里 (nǎli). They are interchangeable.

Cultural Insight

Chinese Bathroom Basics

Bathrooms in China have a reputation for being scary places, however in recent years, bigger cities like Beijing and Shanghai have done a lot to build and clean up public bathrooms. In many areas, you can find a clean public bathroom to use, for a small token fee. As a tip, you may want to carry toilet paper with you at all times, as many bathrooms are not equipped with toilet paper. With the rise of fast food restaurants and coffee chains in China, you also can try these sorts of places when you are in need of a bathroom.



Absolute Beginner S1

Essentials - Let Me Through!

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Simplified Chinese

A 对不起，让一下。
B 嗯？
A 请让一下。
B 哦，对不起。

Traditional Chinese

A 對不起，讓一下。
B 嗯？
A 請讓一下。
B 哦，對不起。

Pinyin

A Duìbuqǐ, ràng yíxià.
B En?
A Qǐng ràng yíxià.
B Ō, duìbuqǐ.

English

A Excuse me, let me through.
B Huh?
A Please let me through.
B Oh, sorry.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
对不起	對不起	duìbuqǐ	sorry, excuse me
让一下	讓一下	ràng yíxià	let (me) through
嗯	嗯	en	uh-huh, hmm, huh



请	請	qǐng	please
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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

对不起，请问长城饭店在哪儿？	Duìbuqǐ, qǐng wèn Chángchéng Fàndiàn zài nǎr?	Excuse me, can you tell me where the Great Wall Hotel is?
不好意思，让一下。	Bùhǎoyìsi, ràng yíxià.	Sorry, can you let me through?
嗯？迈克？你怎么在这儿？	En? Mài kè? Nǐ zěnmē zài zhèr?	Huh? Mike? What are you doing here?
哦，不好意思，请坐。	ō, bùhǎoyìsi, qǐng zuò.	Oh, sorry! Please sit.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Moderating Tone of Voice

请让一下。

"Please let me through."

让一下 (ràng yíxià)

Tacked onto the end of a verb, 一下 (yíxià) softens the tone of a statement. It is more polite. Some other commonly used expressions using 一下 (yíxià) are:

- 看一下
kàn yíxià
"Have a look."
- 听一下
tīng yíxià
"Have a listen."

Cultural Insight

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Chinese Compactor

This dialogue will come in handy as you maneuver your way through the crowded buses, subways, and streets of China. Many times in China, you may find yourself waiting in a large jumble of people, instead of an orderly line. The rules of engagement change from politeness to every man for themselves. Even if there is one inch between you and the person in front of you, it is considered open space. This is especially true while waiting in line at ticket counters and train stations.





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Essentials - Can You Write That Down?

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Simplified Chinese

- A 我們想去北海公園，你知道在哪兒嗎？
B 知道。
A 你可以寫一下嗎？
B 當然。
A 謝謝。

Traditional Chinese

- A 我們想去北海公園，你知道在哪兒嗎？
B 知道。
A 你可以寫一下嗎？
B 當然。
A 謝謝。

Pinyin

- A Wǒmen xiǎng qù Běihǎi Gōngyuán, nǐ zhīdào zài nǎr ma?
B Zhīdào.
A Nǐ kěyǐ xiě yíxià ma?
B Dāngrán.
A Xièxie.

English

- A We want to go to Beihai Park; do you know where it is?
B Yes.
A Can you write it down?
B Of course.
A Thanks.



Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
北海公园	北海公園	Běihǎi Gōngyuán	Beihai Park
知道	知道	zhīdao	to know
在	在	zài	at
哪儿	哪兒	nǎr	where
可以	可以	kěyǐ	may, can
写	寫	xiě	to write
一下	一下	yíxià	a while
当然	當然	dāngrán	of course, indeed
想	想	xiǎng	would like, to want
去	去	qù	to go

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

你知道怎么走吗?	Nǐ zhīdao zěnmē zǒu ma?	Do you know which way to go?
他在后面。	Tā zài hòumiàn.	He is in the back.
你们去哪儿?	Nǐmen qù nǎr?	Where are you going?
你可以叫我丽丽。	Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lìlì.	You can call me Lili.
你写字很漂亮。	Nǐ xiě zì hěn piàoliang.	You write so beautifully.
等一下。	Děng yíxià.	Wait a moment.
我当然喜欢!	Wǒ dāngrán xǐhuan!	Of course I like it!
我想去看看。	Wǒ xiǎng qù kàn kàn	I want to have a look.
我去宾馆。	Wǒ qù bīnguǎn.	I'm going to the hotel.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Moderating Tone of Voice, 想 ("to desire"), and Answering Yes/No Questions

你可以写一下吗?

"Can you write it down?"

写一下, xiě yíxià ("Write it down.")

Tacked onto the end of a verb, 一下 (yíxià) softens the tone of a statement. It is more polite. Some other commonly used expressions using 一下 (yíxià) are:

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1. 看一下
kàn yíxià
"Have a look."
2. 听一下
tīng yíxià
"Have a listen."

想, xiǎng ("Would like, to desire, to want")

The verb 想 (xiǎng) has a few different meanings and usages. In this dialogue, it is a modal verb that indicates the desire to do something.

For Example:

1. 我们想去北海公园...
Wǒmen xiǎng qù Běihǎi Gōngyuán...
"We want to go to Beihai Park..."

When used in this context, we must follow 想 (xiǎng) with a verb, a clause, or a sentence.

Answering a Yes/No Question

To answer in the affirmative, one simply repeats the main verb in the sentence.

For Example:

1. 你知道在哪儿吗?
Nǐ zhīdào zài nǎr ma?

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- "Do you know where it is?"
- 知道。
Zhīdào.
"Yes."

To answer in the negative, one just adds the word '不' (bù) in front of the verb. 不 (bù) is the word we use in Chinese to express the negative.

Please note that we often drop the subject in Chinese. No need to say, "I know." You can simply say "know."

Cultural Insight

The Chinese Written Word

At times, even Chinese people need to see things written down (sometimes on paper, or sometimes they will even trace a character out onto the palm of their hand) because a lot of Chinese words are homophones—meaning they are different characters, but have the same pronunciation. So sometimes, the best way to avoid confusion is to have something written down. It can ward off a lot of confusion!





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Essentials - No, Thanks!

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Simplified Chinese

- A 来，尝一尝。
B 不要，谢谢。
A 来吧。很好吃。
B 我不要。

Traditional Chinese

- A 來，嘗一嘗。
B 不要，謝謝。
A 來吧。很好吃。
B 我不要。

Pinyin

- A lái, chángyīcháng.
B Bù yào, xièxie.
A lái ba. Hěn hǎochī.
B Wǒ bù yào.

English

- A Come, have a taste.
B I don't want any, thanks.
A Come on. It's delicious.
B I don't want it.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
来	來	lái	to come
尝	嘗	cháng	to taste
不	不	bù	(negative prefix)

要	要	yào	to want
吧	吧	ba	(particle; denotes suggestion)
很	很	hěn	very
好吃	好吃	hǎochī	delicious

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

他今天晚上来。	Tā jīntiān wǎnshang lái.	He is coming tonight.
尝尝这个。	Chángchang zhège.	Have a taste of this.
我不认识他。	Wǒ bù rènshi tā.	I don't know him.
他要一张纸。	Tā yào yī zhāng zhǐ.	He wants a piece of paper.
好，我点吧。	Hǎo, wǒ diǎn ba.	Okay, I'll order.
今天玩得很开心。	Jīntiān wán de hěn kāixīn.	Today was great fun.
这道菜很好吃！	Zhè dào cài hěn hǎo chī.	This dish is very delicious!

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Reduplication of Verbs

尝一尝

chángyīcháng

"Come have a taste."

We use verb reduplication to deemphasize an action. It implies that the action is only done slightly or only for a short period of time.

We can say monosyllabic verbs twice in a row or have an unstressed yi (一) in between. For example, kàn ("to look") becomes kàn kàn or kàn yi kàn ("to have a look" or "to look a little bit"). Disyllabic verbs are repeated one after the other without yi: rèn shi ("to get to know") becomes rèn shi rèn shi ("to get to know a little").

We can use verb reduplication in commands to make the request sound less harsh.

The structure is:

(verb) + (verb)

or

(monosyllabic verb) + yi + (monosyllabic verb)

Modal Particle 吧 (ba) - Making a Suggestion

吧 (ba) is a modal particle with two main functions. The first is to make suggestions.

For Example:

1. 进去吧
jìn qù ba
"Let's go inside."
2. 来吧
Lái ba.
"Come on."

We also use 吧 (ba) to seek agreement about one's conjectures. Ending a statement with 吧 (ba) is similar to using a tag question in English (e.g., "Wouldn't you agree?" / "Don't you think so?" / "Right?" etc.).

Normally, we cannot use 吧 (ba) at the end of questions.

Forming the Negative - 不 (bù)

不(bù) is an adverb we use to make verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs negative. When 不(bù) negates an adjective or adverb, it comes right before that word in the sentence. However, when it modifies a verb, 不(bù) comes before the whole phrase, including prepositions and auxiliary verbs.

Language Tip - The 不 (bù) Tone Change Rule

When the character 不(bù), which we pronounce in the fourth tone, precedes

another character that is also fourth tone, the pronunciation of 不(bù) changes to second tone (bú). So, as we saw in this lesson's dialogue, 不要(bù yào) when spoken, actually is pronounced as [bú yào]. However, please note that the pinyin tone marks do not change to reflect this pronunciation change. We still write it in pinyin as (bù yào).

Cultural Insight

Chinese Market Inflation

In Chinese markets, the sellers can be quite persistent. At times, you may have to refuse numerous times and quite emphatically before they give up. It's just a different 'marketing' style. Also, don't forget to bargain on the price. The price quoted to you can often be very overinflated as the seller is expecting that you will attempt to 'talk price' before agreeing on a final purchase price.





Absolute Beginner S1

Getting Around: Finding the Subway in China

16

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Simplified Chinese

- A 请问，地铁在哪儿？
B 在前面。
A 远吗？
B 不远。

Traditional Chinese

- A 請問，地鐵在哪兒？
B 在前面。
A 遠嗎？
B 不遠。

Pinyin

- A Qǐngwèn, dìtiě zài nǎr?
B Zài qiánmiàn.
A Yuǎn ma?
B Bù yuǎn.

English

- A Excuse me, where is the subway?
B Up ahead.
A Is it far?
B Not far.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
请问	請問	qǐng wèn	may I ask
地铁	地鐵	dìtiě	subway
在	在	zài	at



前面	前面	qiánmian	in front
远	遠	yuǎn	far

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

请问，你是哪里人？	Qǐng wèn, nǐ shì nǎlǐ rén?	May I ask where you are from?
坐地铁去，很方便。	Zuò dìtiě qù, hěn fāngbiàn.	Take the subway there: it's really convenient.
他在后面。	Tā zài hòumiàn.	He is in the back.
你在我的前面。	Nǐ zài wǒ de qiánmiàn.	You're in front of me.
我家离这里很远。	Wǒ jiā lí zhèlǐ hěn yuǎn.	My house is very far from here.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Directional Phrases

在前面。

"Up ahead."

To tell someone the location of something, you can use the structure in this lesson's dialogue.

For Example:

- 在前面
zài qiánmiàn
"up ahead" (literally, "at in front")

Use the preposition 在 (zài), plus the location.

For Example:

1. 在左边
zài zuǒbiān
"on the left side"
2. 在右边
zài yòubiān
"on the right side"

哪儿, nǎr ("Where")

1. 地铁在哪儿?
Dìtiě zài nǎr?
"Where is the subway?"

Unlike English, when asking the location of something, the 'where' comes at the end of the question in Chinese. The 在 (zài) is a preposition meaning "at" or "in."

There are two ways of saying "where" in Chinese, depending on the region the speaker is from. One is as in our dialogue: 哪儿 (nǎr), the other is 哪里 (nǎli). They are interchangeable.

Cultural Insight

Riding the subway is a convenient way to get around Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. More cities in China are drawing up plans to build metro lines. Cities such as Chengdu, and Zhengzhou are experiencing large amounts of infrastructure upgrades. In Beijing, 800,000 trips are made everyday on Line 5 alone. Line 5 which opened in 2007 was planned to have 800,000 passengers in 2032. Since more and more cars are hitting the roads in China's major cities, citizens are turning

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more to public transportation to beat the traffic jams. For only 2 RMB you can travel as far as you want on the Beijing subway system. In Shanghai and Guangzhou however the fee is based on how far you want to travel.





Absolute Beginner S1

Getting Around in China: Does This Bus Go to...?

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Simplified Chinese

- A 到南京路吗?
B 不到。七路车到。
A 车票多少钱?
B 两块钱。

Traditional Chinese

- A 到南京路嗎?
B 不到。七路車到。
A 車票多少錢?
B 兩塊錢。

Pinyin

- A Dào Nánjīng Lù ma?
B Bù dào. Qī lù chē dào.
A Chēpiào duōshǎo qián?
B Liǎng kuài qián.

English

- A Does this go to Nanjing Road?
B No, it doesn't. Bus number seven goes there.
A How much is the bus fare?
B Two RMB.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
到	到	dào	to arrive
南京	南京	Nánjīng	Nanjing
路	路	lù	road



七	七	qī	seven
车	車	chē	vehicle
车票	車票	chēpiào	bus ticket
多少	多少	duōshǎo	how much, how many
钱	錢	qián	money
两	兩	liǎng	two
块	块	kuài	(measure word for money)

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

从这边到那边要多久?	Cóng zhèbian dào nàbian yào duōjiǔ?	How long does it take to go from here to there?
福州路在哪儿?	Fú Zhōu Lù zài nǎr?	Where is FuZhou Road?
我们的公司有七个人.	Wǒmen de gōngsī yǒu qī gè rén.	There are seven people in our company.
你会开车吗?	Nǐ huì kāichē ma?	Do you know how to drive a car?
车票多少钱?	Chēpiào duō shǎo qián?	How much is the bus fare?
这个多少钱?	Zhège duōshǎo qián	How much is this?
16块钱。	Shí liù kuài qián.	Sixteen Renminbi.
两个苹果五块钱。	Liǎng ge píngguǒ wǔ kuài qián.	Two apples are five yuan.
这条裙子一百块钱。	Zhè tiáo qúnzi yī bǎi kuài qián.	This skirt is one hundred RMB.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Numbers

不到。七路车到。

"No, it doesn't. Bus number seven goes there."

Numbers one through ten:

Number	Chinese	Pinyin
1	一	yī
2	二	èr
3	三	sān

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4	四	sì
5	五	wǔ
6	六	liù
7	七	qī
8	八	bā
9	九	jiǔ
10	十	shí

多少, duōshao ("How much")

多少(duōshao) means "How much."

When inquiring about an amount of money, we use the phrase 多少钱? (duōshǎo qián?), literally, "How much money?"

Cultural Insight

Chinese Bus Technology

In bigger cities, buses tend to be quite modern and even have payment systems with swipe cards or some other such technology to make bus taking simpler. However, even in Shanghai, some routes have older buses, and feature a ticket taker who will come around to all the passengers and collect your money and give you a ticket; the fare depending on which stop you are getting off at. So memorize your stop--the more modern buses generally will have a screen with the pinyin and English name of the upcoming stop on it; or if that is not the case, hopefully your helpful ticket lady or a fellow passenger will assist you in knowing where to get off.



Absolute Beginner S1

Getting Around in China: How Do I Get Home?

18

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Simplified Chinese

- A 我怎么回家?
B 你可以坐出租车。
A 这儿有地铁站吗?
B 地铁站有点儿远。

Traditional Chinese

- A 我怎麼回家?
B 你可以坐出租車。
A 這兒有地鐵站嗎?
B 地鐵站有點兒遠。

Pinyin

- A Wǒ zěnmē huíjiā?
B Nǐ kěyǐ zuò chūzūchē.
A Zhèr yǒu dìtiě zhàn ma?
B Dìtiě zhàn yǒu diǎnr yuǎn.

English

- A How do I get home?
B You can take a taxi.
A Is there a subway station around here?
B The subway station is a little far away.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
怎么	怎麼	zěnmē	how
回	回	huí	to return
家	家	jiā	home, family



可以	可以	kěyǐ	may, can
坐	坐	zuò	to sit
出租车	出租車	chūzūchē	taxi
这儿	這兒	zhèr	here
有	有	yǒu	to have
地铁	地鐵	dìtiě	subway
站	站	zhàn	station
一点儿	一點兒	yīdiǎnr	a little
远	遠	yuǎn	far

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

中文怎么说?	Zhōngwén zěnmē shuō ?	How do you say it in Chinese?
他什么时候回来?	Tā shénmeshíhòu huílai?	When does he come back?
你们家真漂亮。	Nǐmen jiā zhēn piàoliang.	Your home is very beautiful.
你可以叫我丽丽。	Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lili.	You can call me Lili.
我们坐出租车吧。	Wǒmen zuò chūzūchē ba.	Let's take a taxi.
请坐。	Qǐngzuò.	Please sit.
哪儿有出租车?	Nǎr yǒu chūzūchē?	Where are there taxis?
我住在这儿。	Wǒ zhù zài zhèr.	I live here.
这儿有图书馆吗?	Zhèr yǒu túshūguǎn ma?	Is there a library around here?
坐地铁去, 很方便。	Zuò dìtiě qù, hěn fāngbiàn.	Take the subway there: it's really convenient.
这一站是什么?	Zhè yī zhàn shì shénme?	What stop is this?
他只会说一点儿。	Tā zhǐ huì shuō yīdiǎnr.	He can only speak a little.
我家离这里很远。	Wǒ jiā lí zhèlǐ hěn yuǎn.	My house is very far from here.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 怎么 (Zěnmē) - "How"

我怎么回家?

"How do I get home?"

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怎么 (Zěnmě) is a pronoun we use to ask how an action is done. It is equivalent to "how" or "how to" in English and is followed by a verb.

The sentence pattern we use for 怎么 (Zěnmě) is:

(subject) + zěnmě + (verb phrase)

For Example:

1. 我怎么回家?

Wǒ zěnmě huíjiā?

"How do I get home?"

有 (Yǒu) - To Express Existence

有 (Yǒu) is a verb that we can use to indicate existence (like "there is" or "there are" in English). Typically, a phrase indicating time or place will precede 有 (yǒu).

(time / place) + yǒu + (noun)

For Example:

1. 这儿有地铁站吗?

Zhèr yǒu dìtiě zhàn ma?

"Is there a subway station here?"

有 (Yǒu) - To Express Extent

有 (Yǒu) is a verb that we can also use to specify the degree or extent of some quality. 有 (yǒu) can combine with 一点儿 (yì) diǎr before adjectives to mean "somewhat [adjective]" or "a little bit [adjective]."

(subject) + yǒu + (extent) + (adjective)

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For Example:

1. 地铁站有点儿远。

Dìtiě zhàn yǒu diǎnr yuǎn.

"The subway station is a little far away."

Cultural Insight

An Inexpensive Chinese Ride

Taxis are a relatively inexpensive way to get around in China in comparison with taxi fares in other major cities of the world.





Absolute Beginner S1

Getting Around China - I Want to Go Here!

19

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Simplified Chinese

- A 你想去哪儿?
B 我想去淮海路。
A 什么路?
B 看这儿。
A 哦，我知道了。淮海路。好的。

Traditional Chinese

- A 你想去哪兒?
B 我想去淮海路。
A 甚麼路?
B 看這兒。
A 哦，我知道了。淮海路。好的。

Pinyin

- A Nǐ xiǎng qù nǎr?
B Wǒ xiǎng qù Huáihǎi Lù.
A Shénme lù?
B Kàn zhèr.
A O, wǒ zhīdao le. Huáihǎi Lù. Hǎo de.

English

- A Where do you want to go?
B I want to go to Huaihai Road.
A What road?
B Look here.
A Oh, I know. Huaihai Road. Okay.



Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
去	去	qù	to go
想	想	xiǎng	would like, to want
哪儿	哪兒	nǎr	where
路	路	lù	road
什么	甚麼	shénme	what
看	看	kàn	to look
这儿	這兒	zhèr	here
知道	知道	zhīdào	to know

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

我去公园。	Wǒ qù gōngyuán.	I'm going to the park.
我想去看看。	Wǒ xiǎng qù kàn kàn	I want to have a look.
你们去哪儿？	Nǐmen qù nǎr?	Where are you going?
淮海路在哪儿？	Huái hǎi lù zài nǎr?	Where is Huaihai Road?
你说什么呢？	Nǐ shuō shénme ne?	What did you say?
你看，这儿有一只鸟。	Nǐ kàn, zhèr yǒu yī zhī niǎo.	Look. There is a bird here.
这儿有人吗？	Zhèr yǒu rén ma?	Is there anyone here?
我知道这件事。	Wǒ zhīdào zhè jiàn shì.	I know about this.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 想, xiǎng ("would like," "to desire," "to want")

我想去淮海路。

"I want to go to Huaihai Road."

The verb 想 (xiǎng) has a few different meanings and usages. In this dialogue, it is a modal verb that indicates the desire to do something.

For Example:

1. 我想吃面条。

Wǒ xiǎng chī miàntiáo.

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"I want to eat noodles."

When used in this context, we must follow 想 (xiǎng) by a verb, a clause, or a sentence.

哪儿, nǎr ("where")

Unlike English, when asking the location of something, the "where" comes at the end of the question in Chinese.

For Example:

1. 你想去哪儿?
Nǐ xiǎng qù nǎr?
"Where do you want to go?"

There are two ways of saying "where" in Chinese, depending on the region the speaker is from. One is as in our dialogue: 哪儿 (nǎr); the other is 哪里 (nǎli). They are interchangeable.

Using the Question Word 什么, shénme ("what")

When forming a question with the word "what" in Chinese, generally the "what" comes at the end of the sentence, not at the beginning like it would in English. In Chinese, the order is like this: "You would like to eat what?"

For Example:

1. 你想吃什么?
Nǐ xiǎng chī shénme?
"What do you want to eat?"

However, as in the case of this lesson's dialogue, 什么 (Shén me) can also come before a noun to mean "what (noun)."

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For Example:

1. 什么路?
Shénme lù?
"What road?"

Cultural Insight

Chinese Taxi Preparation

If you are a new Chinese learner, having your destination written down on a piece of paper for the taxi drivers' reference can be of great help when taking taxis. In general, Chinese cities are immense in size and complexity, and a lot of streets have very similar sounding names. Therefore, your best bet is to come prepared. The taxi driver will likely thank you for it, and you will avoid confusion and getting the run around!





Absolute Beginner S1

Meeting in China - Where are You From?

2

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Simplified Chinese

你是哪国人?
我是美国人。你呢?
我是中国人。

Traditional Chinese

你是哪國人?
我是美國人。你呢?
我是中國人。

Pinyin

Nǐ shì nǎ guó rén?
Wǒ shì Měiguórén. Nǐ ne?
Wǒ shì Zhōngguórén.

English

Which country are you from?
I am American. And you?
I am Chinese.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
是	是	shì	to be
哪	哪	nǎ / něi	which
国	国	guó	country, state
人	人	rén	person
美国人	美國人	Měiguórén	American person
你呢	你呢	nǐ ne	how about you
中国人	中國人	Zhōngguórén	Chinese person

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

他是我哥哥。	Tā shì wǒ gēgē.	He is my older brother.
你是哪国人？	nǐ shì nǎ guó rén ?	Which country are you from?
这是什么国家？	Zhè shì shénme guójiā?	What country is this?
我是北京人。	Wǒ shì Běijīng rén	I am from Beijing.
她是美国人。	Tā shì Měiguórén.	She is American.
我叫张飞，你呢？	Wǒ jiào Zhāng Fēi, nǐ ne?	I am called Zhang Fei; how about you?
他们都是中国人。	Tāmen dōu shì Zhōngguó rén.	They are all Chinese people.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Expressing Ethnicity

你是哪国人？

"Which country are you from?"

In Chinese, ethnicity/nationality expresses itself by simply adding the word 人 (rén) onto the end of the name of the country you are from.

For Example:

1. 美国, Měiguó ("America")
2. 美国人, Měiguó rén ("American person")
3. 中国, Zhōngguó ("China")
4. 中国人, Zhōngguó rén ("Chinese person")

Likewise, to express what city, state, or province you are from, you can use the same phrasing.

For Example:

1. 我是北京人。
Wǒ shì Běijīng rén.

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"I'm from Beijing."

Forming a Follow-Up Question

We use 呢 (ne) to form a follow-up question. Meaning, we use it to ask the same question as the one we previously asked, but about another subject or object. So, as is the case in our dialogue:

我是美国人。你呢？
Wǒ shì Měiguórén. Nǐ ne?
"I am American. And you?"

Basic Word Order

We see a very basic sentence structure that Chinese often uses, as in the sentence:

我是美国人。
Wǒ shì Měiguórén.
"I am American."

The word order here is 'subject + verb + object.'

"Which," 哪 (nǎ/něi)

To ask a person which country they are from, we use the question word 哪 (nǎ). Simply put, the "which" in front of the word for "country + person," which gives you, "Which country are you from?"

For Example:

你是哪国人？
Nǐ shì nǎ guó rén?

Which is literally, "You are which country person?"

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Please note that we sometimes pronounce the character for "which" (哪) as [něi]. Both pronunciations are correct, it's just a matter of personal preference as to which one the speaker uses. The meaning is the same.

Cultural Insight

Are People in China Staring at You?

People in China are in general, very curious about foreigners, so expect to get many stares and lots of practice using this lesson!



Absolute Beginner S1

Getting Around - Asking Directions in China

20

Simplified	2
Traditional	2
Pinyin	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3

Simplified Chinese

- A 去天安门怎么走?
B 直走, 然后左转。
A 好的, 直走, 然后左转。
B 在你的右边。

Traditional Chinese

- A 去天安門怎麼走?
B 直走, 然後左轉。
A 好的, 直走, 然後左轉。
B 在你的右邊。

Pinyin

- A Qù Tiānānmén zěnmě zǒu?
B Zhí zǒu, ránhòu zuǒzhuǎn.
A Hǎo de, zhí zǒu, ránhòu zuǒzhuǎn.
B Zài nǐ de yòubiān.

English

- A How do I get to Tiananmen Square?
B Go straight, then turn left.
A Okay, go straight, then turn left.
B It will be on your right.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
天安门	天安門	Tiān'ānmén	Tian'anmen
怎么	怎麼	zěnmě	how
走	走	zǒu	to walk, to go



直	直	zhí	straight
然后	然後	ránhòu	and then, next
左	左	zuǒ	left
转	轉	zhuǎn	to turn
右	右	yòu	right
右边	右边	yòubian	on the right

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

中文怎么说？	Zhōngwén zěnmě shuō ?	How do you say it in Chinese?
我们走吧。	Wǒmen zǒu ba.	Let's go.
一直走。	Yízhí zǒu.	Keep going straight.
别提了，我又迟到了。	Bié tí le, wǒ yòu chídào le.	Don't mention it; I was late again.
我家在左边。	Wǒ jiā zài zuǒbian.	My house is on the left.
这里要右转。	Zhèlǐ yào yòu zhuǎn.	Turn right here.
靠右边停。	Kào yòubiān tíng.	Stop on the right.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Possessive Pronouns and Direction Words

直走，然后左转。

"Go straight, then turn left."

Mandarin doesn't have possessive pronouns. We convey the meaning of a possessive pronoun with 'pronoun' + 的 (de).

For Example:

1. 我的 (wǒ de)
2. 你的 (nǐ de)
3. 他的 (tā de)
4. 她的 (tā de)

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- 我们的 (wǒmen de)
- 你们的 (nǐmen de)

Direction Words

To convey "on your 'X' side," you use the following pattern as heard in this lesson's dialogue.

For Example:

1. 在你的右边。
Zài nǐ de yòubiān.
"On your right side."
2. 在你的左边。
Zài nǐ de zuǒbiān.
"On your left side."





Absolute Beginner S1

Buying - This and That in China

21

Simplified	2
Traditional	2
Pinyin	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3

Simplified Chinese

- A 这个多少钱?
B 十五块钱。
A 那个呢?
B 十九块钱。
A 好, 我买这个。

Traditional Chinese

- A 這個多少錢?
B 十五塊錢。
A 那個呢?
B 十九塊錢。
A 好, 我買這個。

Pinyin

- A Zhège duōshǎo qián?
B Shíwǔ kuài.
A Nàge ne?
B Shíjiǔ kuài.
A Hǎo, wǒ mǎi zhège.

English

- A How much is this one?
B Eighteen RMB.
A What about that one?
B Nineteen RMB.
A Okay, I'll buy this one.



Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
这	這	zhè	this
那	那	nà	that
个	個	ge	(measure word)
多少	多少	duōshǎo	how much, how many
钱	錢	qián	money
十五	十五	shíwǔ	fifteen (15)
十九	十九	shíjiǔ	nineteen (19)
块	塊	kuài	(measure word for money)
呢	呢	ne	(follow-up question particle)
买	買	mǎi	to buy

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

尝尝这个。

那是什么？

我有四个孩子。

这个多少钱？

16块钱。

十五块怎么样？

这条裙子一百块钱。

她喜欢中国菜。日本菜呢？

我是美国人。你呢？

我要买那本书。

Chángchang zhège.

Nà shì shénme?

Wǒ yǒu sì gè hái zi.

Zhège duōshǎo qián

Shí liù kuài qián.

Shíwǔ kuài zěnmeyàng?

Zhè tiáo qún zi yī bǎi kuài qián.

Tā xǐ huān zhōng guó cài.

Rì běn cài ne?

Wǒ shì měiguó rén. Nǐ ne?

Wǒ yào mǎi nà běn shū.

Have a taste of this.

What is that?

I have four children.

How much is this?

Sixteen Renminbi.

What about fifteen kuai?

This skirt is one hundred RMB.

She likes Chinese food.

What about Japanese food?

I'm an American. And you?

I want to buy that book.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 这, zhè/zhèi ("this") and 那, nà/nèi ("that")

这个多少钱？

"How much is this one?"

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1. 这个多少钱?
Zhège duōshǎo qián?
"How much is this one?"
2. 那个呢?
Nàge ne?
"What about that one?"

这 (zhè/zhèi) and 那 (nà/nèi) are pronouns that function like the English words "this" and "that" respectively. In order to connect 这 (zhè/zhèi) and 那 (nà/nèi) to nouns, you need a measure word before the noun, as in the above examples from the dialogue (这个 / 那个 - zhège / nàge).

The structure is:

这 (zhèi) / 那 (nèi) + (measure word)

这 (zhèi) / 那 (nèi) + (numeral, if applicable) + (measure word)

Numbers 11 to 20

11 十一 (shíyī)

12 十二 (shí'èr)

13 十三 (shísān)

14 十四 (shísì)

15 十五 (shíwǔ)

16 十六 (shíliù)

17 十七 (shíqī)

18 十八 (shíbā)

19 十九 (shíjiǔ)

20 二十 (èrshí)

呢 (ne) - Forming a Follow-up Question

1. 这个多少钱?
Zhège duōshǎo qián?)
"How much is this one?"
2. 那个呢?
Nàge ne?
"What about that one?"

We use 呢 (ne) to form a follow-up question. Meaning, we use it to ask the same question as the one previously asked, but about another subject or object.



Absolute Beginner S1

Buying - Get a Better Price in China!

22

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Simplified Chinese

- A 二十块钱? 太贵了!
B 不贵。
A 便宜一点儿吧。
B 十块怎么样?
A 好的。

Traditional Chinese

- A 二十塊錢? 太貴了!
B 不貴。
A 便宜一點兒吧。
B 十塊怎麼樣?
A 好的。

Pinyin

- A Ershí kuài ? Tài guì le!
B Bù guì.
A Piányi yīdiǎnr ba.
B Shí kuài zěnmeyàng?
A Hǎo de.

English

- A Twenty RMB? That's too expensive!
B It's not expensive.
A Could you make it a little cheaper?
B How about ten RMB?
A Okay.



Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
二十	二十	èrshí	twenty (20)
块	块	kuài	(measure word for money)
钱	錢	qián	money
太	太	tài	too
贵	貴	guì	expensive
了	了	le	(particle)
不	不	bù	(negative prefix)
便宜	便宜	piányi	inexpensive
一点儿	一點兒	yīdiǎnr	a little
吧	吧	ba	(particle; denotes suggestion)
十	十	shí	ten (10)
怎么样	怎麼樣	zěnmeyàng	how about it

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

那个二十块钱。
这条裙子一百块钱。

16块钱。
太冷了!
汽车都很贵。
我不认识他。
便宜一点儿, 可以吗?

他只会说一点儿。
好, 我点吧。
十块钱。
今天天气怎么样?

Nàge èrshí kuài qián.

Zhè tiáo qúnzi yī bǎi kuài qián.

Shí liù kuài qián.

Tài lěng le!

Qìchē dōu hěn guì.

Wǒ bù rènshi tā.

Piányi yīdiǎnr, kěyǐ ma?

Tā zhǐ huì shuō yīdiǎnr.

Hǎo, wǒ diǎn ba.

Shí kuài qián.

Jīntiān tiānqì zěnmeyàng?

That one is twenty kuai.

This skirt is one hundred RMB.

Sixteen Renminbi.

(It's) too cold!

Cars are all expensive.

I don't know him.

Can (you) make it a little cheaper?

He can only speak a little.

Okay, I'll order.

Ten yuan.

How is the weather today?

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Adding Emphasis - 太。。。 了 (tài... le)
太 貴了!

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Tài guì le!
"Too expensive!"

We use the pattern 太...了 to add emphasis. The adjective that is placed between the 太 (tài) and the 了 (le) is what is being emphasized. In the example from this lesson's dialogue, the person feels the price is "too expensive" or "so expensive," and therefore uses this expression. Other commonly used 太...了 expressions that you will hear a lot are:

1. 太好了
tài hǎo le
"Great!"
2. 太晚了
tài wǎn le
"Too late"

(adjective) + 一点儿 (yīdiǎnr)

便宜一点儿
Piányi yīdiǎnr
"a little cheaper"

We use 一点儿 (yīdiǎnr), or just 点儿 or 点 to soften the tone or say "a little" or "a bit." The pattern is:

Adjective + 一点儿 (yīdiǎnr). Please note that sometimes we shorten 一点儿 (yīdiǎnr) to 点儿 (diǎnr) or even just 点 (diǎn).

Making a Suggestion - 吧 (ba)

便宜一点儿吧。
Piányi yīdiǎnr ba.
"Could you make it a little cheaper?"

吧 (Ba) is a modal particle we use at the end of a sentence to turn a statement into a suggestion. It also softens the tone.

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For Example:

1. 进去吧
jìnqù ba
"Go in"
2. 走吧
zǒu ba
"Let's go"

Cultural Insight

Chinese Hagglers

Rarely is the price on the price tag the price paid for an item in China. Hagglng over prices is expected. Depending on the outlet, you can get anywhere from ten to ninety percent off the quoted price. So learn from the locals, and sharpen up your bargaining skills so you don't end up being ripped off.





Absolute Beginner S1

Buying - Finding a Phone Card in China

23

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Simplified Chinese

- A 我在哪儿可以买电话卡?
B 在便利店。
A 对不起，我听不懂。
B 小商店。在那边。

Traditional Chinese

- A 我在哪兒可以買電話卡?
B 在便利店。
A 對不起，我聽不懂。
B 小商店。在那邊。

Pinyin

- A Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi diànhuà kǎ?
B Zài biànlì diàn.
A Duìbuqǐ, wǒ tīng bù dǒng.
B Xiǎo shāngdiàn. Zài nàbiān.

English

- A Where can I buy a telephone card?
B At a convenience store.
A Sorry, I don't understand.
B A small shop. Over there.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
可以	可以	kěyǐ	may, can
买	買	mǎi	to buy
电话卡	電話卡	diànhuàkǎ	telephone card



便利店	便利店	biànlìdiàn	convenience store
对不起	對不起	duìbùqǐ	sorry
听不懂	聽不懂	tīng bù dǒng	to not understand
小	小	xiǎo	little, small
商店	商店	shāngdiàn	shop/store
那边	那邊	nàbian	over there

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

你可以叫我丽丽。	Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lìlì.	You can call me Lili.
我要买那本书。	Wǒ yào mǎi nà běn shū.	I want to buy that book.
你有电话卡吗？	Nǐ yǒu diànhuà kǎ ma?	Do you have a telephone card?
去便利店买就好。	Qù biànlì diàn mǎi jiù hǎo.	Just go to a convenience store to buy it.
对不起, 我很忙。	Duìbuqǐ, wǒ hěn máng.	Sorry, I'm very busy.
你说的话我听不懂。	Nǐ shuō de huà wǒ tīng bù dǒng.	I don't understand what you are saying.
这儿有一个小卖部。	Zhèr yǒu yī ge xiǎo mài bù.	There is a small shop here.
他家附近有一间大商店。	Tā jiā fùjìn yǒu yī jiān dà shāng diàn.	There is a large store near his home.
从这边到那边要多久？	Cóng zhèbian dào nàbian yào duō jiǔ?	How long does it take to go from here to there?

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 我在哪儿可以... Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ... ("Where can I ...")
 我在哪儿可以买电话卡？
 Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi diànhuà kǎ?
 "Where can I buy a telephone card?"

Notice the word order in the above sentence structure:

Subject + location + (whatever it is that you want to do/find)

So, for example, if you are dying for a coffee, you could use this sentence

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structure to find one:

1. 我在哪儿可以喝咖啡?

Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ hē kāfēi?

"Where can I drink some coffee?"

Or, if you need to buy some English books, you could ask:

1. 我在哪儿可以买英文书?

Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi yīngwén shū?

"Where can I buy English books?"

Cultural Insight

The Convenience of Convenience Stores

Convenience stores in China are plentiful, and though often small in size, stock an enormous variety of goods. If there is something you need, try a convenience store. From packaged chicken feet for a snack, to umbrellas, to underwear, you have a good chance of finding what you need.



Absolute Beginner S1

Buying - By Train or by Plane in China?

24

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Simplified Chinese

- A 我要去北京。 我应该怎么去?
B 你可以坐火车或者坐飞机。
A 我怎么买火车票?
B 你可以在火车站买。

Traditional Chinese

- A 我要去北京。 我應該怎麼去?
B 你可以坐火車或者坐飛機。
A 我怎麼買火車票?
B 你可以在火車站買。

Pinyin

- A Wǒ yào qù Běijīng. Wǒ yīnggāi zěnmē qù?
B Nǐ kěyǐ zuò huǒchē huòzhě zuò fēijī.
A Wǒ zěnmē mǎi huǒchē piào?
B Nǐ kěyǐ zài huǒchē zhàn mǎi.

English

- A I have to go to Beijing. How should I get there?
B You can take a train or you can take a plane.
A How do I buy a train ticket?
B You can buy it at the train station.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
要	要	yào	to be going to, have to
去	去	qù	to go



北京	北京	Běijīng	Beijing
应该	應該	yīnggāi	should
怎么	怎麼	zěnmē	how
可以	可以	kěyǐ	may, can
坐	坐	zuò	to sit
火车	火車	huǒchē	train
或者	或者	huòzhě	or
飞机	飛機	fēijī	airplane
票	票	piào	ticket
火车站	火車站	huǒchēzhàn	train station

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

明天我们要去杭州。	Míngtiān wǒmen yào qù Hángzhōu.	Tomorrow, we are going to Hangzhou.
我去公园。	Wǒ qù gōngyuán.	I'm going to the park.
我们明天应该休息。	Wǒmen míngtiān yīnggāi xiūxi.	We should rest tomorrow.
中文怎么说？	Zhōngwén zěnmē shuō ?	How do you say it in Chinese?
你可以叫我丽丽。	Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lili.	You can call me Lili.
我们坐出租车吧。	Wǒmen zuò chūzūchē ba.	Let's take a taxi.
请坐。	Qǐngzuò.	Please sit.
飞机将在10分钟后起飞。	Fēijī jiāng zài shí fēnzhōng hòu qǐfēi.	The airplane will take off in ten minutes.
我要一张票。	Wǒ yào yī zhāng piào.	I want one ticket.
明天我们在火车站见。	Míngtiān wǒmen zài huǒchēzhàn jiàn.	Tomorrow we will meet at the train station.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Saying "I Have to Do [Something]" - 要 (Yào)

我要去北京。

Wǒ yào qù Běijīng.

"I have to go to Beijing."

Yào is an auxiliary verb that you can use to talk about what one will do, or what

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one is obliged to do, in the future. The pattern is:

(subject) + 要 (yào) + (verb)

或者, huòzhě ("Or")

1. 你可以坐火车或者坐飞机。

(Nǐ kěyǐ zuò huǒchē huòzhě zuò fēijī.)

"You can take a train or you can take a plane."

或者 (huòzhě) is a conjunction we use to show two alternatives. It's similar to the English conjunction "or," but we use 或者 (huòzhě) to connect verb phrases, not noun phrases. Also, 或者 (huòzhě) is primarily used in statements (for "or" questions, see 还是 (hái shì) – in our next lesson: Absolute Beginner Lesson 25).

Cultural Insight

All Aboard!

Trains in China are a relatively comfortable way to travel. You can choose your level of luxury as well, anywhere from 'hard seats' to 'soft sleepers.' The train is quite a social environment and a great way to practice Chinese and interact with locals.

Domestic flights in China are relatively inexpensive and convenient. Tickets are easy to purchase, either online or with a local travel agent.



Absolute Beginner S1

Buying - Getting a Train Ticket in China

25

Simplified	2
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Simplified Chinese

- A 我要一张到北京的票。
B 今天的吗?
A 对。
B 你要上午11点的, 下午3点的, 还是晚上7点的?
A 7点的。

Traditional Chinese

- A 我要一張到北京的票。
B 今天的嗎?
A 對。
B 你要上午11點的, 下午3點的, 還是晚上7點的?
A 7點的。

Pinyin

- A Wǒ yào yī zhāng dào Běijīng de piào.
B Jīntiān de ma?
A Duì.
B Nǐ yào shàngwǔ shíyī diǎn de, xiàwǔ sān diǎn de, hái shì
wǎnshàng qī diǎn de?
A Qī diǎn de.

English

- A I want one ticket to Beijing.
B For today?
A Yes.
B Do you want the one at eleven o'clock in the morning,
three o'clock in the afternoon, or seven o'clock in the
evening?
A The seven o'clock one.



Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
要	要	yào	to want
张	張	zhāng	(measure word)
到	到	dào	to
北京	北京	Běijīng	Beijing
的	的	de	possessive particle
票	票	piào	ticket
今天	今天	jīntiān	today
上午	上午	shàngwǔ	morning
下午	下午	xiàwǔ	afternoon
晚上	晚上	wǎnshang	evening
还是	還是	háishì	or

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

他要一张纸。	Tā yào yī zhāng zhǐ.	He wants a piece of paper.
给我一张纸。	Gěi wǒ yī zhāng zhǐ.	Give me a piece of paper.
从早上六点到八点。	Cóng zǎoshang liù diǎn dào bā diǎn.	From 6:00 to 8:00 in the morning.
什么馅儿的？	Shénme xiànr de?	What filling is it?
我要一张票。	Wǒ yào yī zhāng piào.	I want one ticket.
今天是星期四。	Jīntiān shì xīngqī sì.	Today is Thursday.
上午天气很好，下午可能下雨。	Shàngwǔ tiānqì hěn hǎo, xiàwǔ kěnéng xià yǔ.	In the morning, the weather will be good; in the afternoon, it might rain.
各位乘客，下午好。	Gè wèi chéngkè xiàwǔ hǎo.	All passengers, good afternoon.
我们今天晚上去看电影。	Wǒmen jīntiān wǎnshang qù kàn diànyǐng.	Tonight we are going to see a movie.
你是美国人还是加拿大人？	Nǐ shì Měiguó rén háishì Jiā'nádà rén?	Are you American or Canadian?

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is "To Want," "To Desire Something" - 要 (yào) + Noun
我要一张到北京的票。

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Wǒ yào yī zhāng dào Běijīng de piào.

"I want one ticket to Beijing."

We use 要 (yào) in this context: 要 (yào) + noun, to express "to want" or "to desire" something.

The Particle 的 (de)

The particle 的 (de) is a subordinating particle. It is used to make the object which follows it subordinate to the object or idea which precedes it. This is why many people refer to it as a possessive particle. As we can see in this lesson though, the concept of subordination is much more powerful than just signaling that one object belongs to someone or something. As you can see from these sample sentences, 的 is useful in describing the properties of objects in casual speech. Using it also allows us to omit the following noun, as long as the meaning is clear from context.

1. 天的吗?

Jīntiān de ma?

"The one for today?"

2. 你要上午11点的, 下午3点的, 还是晚上7点的?

Nǐ yào shàngwǔ shíyī diǎn de, xiàwǔ sān diǎn de, hái shì wǎnshang qī diǎn de?

"Do you want the 11:00 in the morning one, the 3:00 in the afternoon one, or the 7:00 in the evening one?"

Stating the Time with the Time of Day

1. 你要上午11点的, 下午3点的, 还是晚上7点的?

Nǐ yào shàngwǔ shíyī diǎn de, xiàwǔ sān diǎn de, hái shì wǎnshang qī diǎn de?

"Do you want the one at 11:00 in the morning, 3:00 in the afternoon, or 7:00 in the evening?"

When stating the time of day along with the time in Chinese, the time of day comes before the time itself. This is the opposite of conventional word order in English.

1. 上午八点
shàngwǔ bā diǎn
"eight o'clock in the morning"
2. 晚上九点
wǎnshang jiǔ diǎn
"nine o'clock in the evening"

Cultural Insight

The Chinese rail network is built around a backbone of core lines that connect first-tier cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Express trains travel these routes without stopping, while non-express trains stop briefly along the route to let passengers board and disembark at intermediary stations. If you are travelling between large cities we recommend avoiding the non-express trains as the stopovers can add hours to the length of a trip. This is one reason many short trips in smaller provinces often take as long or longer than long-hauls.

5 There are a few interesting consequences of this arrangement most old China hands take into account when travelling. The first is that train schedules are biased towards the convenience of travellers in major cities. If you're travelling out of Beijing or Shanghai, you'll find most long-distance trains leaving in the late afternoon or evening and arriving in the early morning. In smaller cities, the time your train arrives will depend on your distance from a major transit hub. If you're travelling through the heartland you may find yourself getting on and off trains in the middle of the night. This can make travel in smaller towns quite unpredictable.

This dynamic also affects seat availability. Because local travel is served by trains stopping on longer routes, a few seats are generally reserved each day for sale in intermediary cities. This means that in times of short ticket availability it is still usually possible to board trains that are technically sold out. That said, one of the common forms of corruption in China is for these seats to be scalped privately. While you can usually find tickets in major cities, it is a good idea to buy a few days in advance if you are travelling to smaller towns and cities.



Absolute Beginner S1

Meeting - China Conversation

3

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Simplified Chinese

- A 你喜欢中国吗?
B 喜欢。
A 你喜欢中国菜吗?
B 也喜欢。

Traditional Chinese

- A 你喜歡中國嗎?
B 喜歡。
A 你喜歡中國菜嗎?
B 也喜歡。

Pinyin

- A Nǐ xǐhuan Zhōngguó ma?
B Xǐhuan.
A Nǐ xǐhuan Zhōngguó cài ma?
B Yě xǐhuan.

English

- A Do you like China?
B Yes, I like it.
A Do you like Chinese food?
B Yes, I like it too.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
喜欢	喜歡	xǐhuān	to like
中国菜	中國菜	Zhōngguó cài	Chinese food
吗	嗎	ma	question marker

也	也	yě	also, too
中国	中國	Zhōngguó	China

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

我喜欢中国菜。	Wǒ xǐhuan Zhōngguócài.	I like Chinese food.
中国菜很好吃。	Zhōngguó cài hěn hǎochī.	Chinese food is delicious.
你是加拿大人吗？	Nǐ shì Jiānádàrén ma?	Are you Canadian?
咖啡也好。	Kāfēi yě hǎo.	Coffee is good too.
他也是澳大利亚人。	Tā yě shì Àodàlìyà rén.	He is also Australian.
你去过中国吗？	Nǐ qù guo Zhōngguó ma?	Have you been to China before?

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Forming a Yes/No Question

你喜欢中国菜吗？

"Do you like Chinese food?"

When we add 吗 (ma) onto the end of a statement, it turns the statement into a yes-no question.

For Example:

1. 你是中国人吗？
Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén ma?
"Are you Chinese?"

Answering a Yes/No Question

To answer in the affirmative, one simply repeats the main verb in the sentence.

For Example:

A: 你喜欢中国吗？

A: Nǐ xǐhuan Zhōngguó ma?

A: "Do you like China?"

B: 喜欢。

B: Xǐhuan.

B: "I like it."

Forming the Negative - 不 (bù)

不(bù) is an adverb we use to make verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs negative. When 不(bù) negates an adjective or adverb, it comes right before that word in the sentence. However, when it modifies a verb, 不(bù) comes before the whole phrase, including prepositions and auxiliary verbs.

So, in this lesson's dialogue, if we were to "not like" China or Chinese food, we would say:

B: 不喜欢。

B: Bù xǐhuan.

B: "I don't like it."

也 (yě)

B: 也喜欢。

B: Yě xǐhuan.

B: "I like it too."

The adverb 也 (yě) means "too" or "also." In Chinese, it comes after the subject (if any), and before the verb. The 也 (yě) cannot come before the subject or at the end of the sentence.

For Example:

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北京也很好。

Běijīng yě hěn hǎo.

"Beijing is nice too."

Cultural Insight

Gaining Favor in China

Chinese people love their food, and love to hear that foreigners like it too. So if you would like to curry favor with your newfound friends in China, praise the food. You are sure to get a lot of dinner invites this way, too!





Absolute Beginner S1

Meeting - Studying Chinese

4

Simplified	2
Traditional	2
Pinyin	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3
Cultural Insight	3

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Simplified Chinese

- A 你是学生吗?
B 对。 我学中文。你呢?
A 我是老师。
B 你可以教我中文!

Traditional Chinese

- A 你是學生嗎?
B 對。 我學中文。你呢?
A 我是老師。
B 你可以教我中文!

Pinyin

- A Nǐ shì xuésheng ma?
B Duì. Wǒ xué Zhōngwén. Nǐ ne?
A Wǒ shì lǎoshī.
B Nǐ kěyǐ jiāo wǒ Zhōngwén!

English

- A Are you a student?
B Yes, I study Chinese. How about you?
A I am a teacher.
B You can teach me Chinese!

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
学生	學生	xuésheng	student
对	對	duì	correct, right
学	學	xué	to study



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中文	中文	Zhōngwén	Chinese (language)
老师	老師	lǎoshī	teacher
可以	可以	kěyǐ	may, can
教	教	jiāo	to teach

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

她是大学学生。	Tā shì dàxué xuésheng.	She is a university student.
对，我是美国人。	Duì, wǒ shì Měiguórén.	Yes, I am American.
你在学什么？	Nǐ zài xué shénme?	What are you studying?
我不学中文。	Wǒ bù xué Zhōngwén.	I don't study Chinese.
张老师很忙。	Zhāng lǎoshī hěn máng.	Teacher Zhang is very busy.
你可以叫我丽丽。	Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lili.	You can call me Lili.
我教中文。	Wǒ jiāo Zhōngwén.	I teach Chinese.

Grammar Points

The Focus of this Lesson is Speaking About One's Profession

我是老师。

"I am a teacher."

我是老师。

Wǒ shì lǎoshī.

"I am a teacher."

To tell someone what your profession is, you use this basic sentence structure. Simply put together, 'subject + verb + object.' Just like English, we use the verb "to be" here.

Cultural Insight

The Importance of Chinese Teachers

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In the Chinese culture, Chinese revere their teachers. The classroom atmosphere is one of respect, and students take studying very seriously. The classroom is solemn and more formal than in the West, and strict order is enforced.

If you go to study Chinese in China, there are many opportunities to have free practice. Many Chinese students learning English will be more than happy to participate in a language exchange with you, wherein you let them practice their English on you, and you too take a turn practicing Chinese with them. It's a budget-friendly alternative to hiring a tutor!



Absolute Beginner S1

Meeting - Time for Class

5

Simplified	2
Traditional	2
Pinyin	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3

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Simplified Chinese

- A 几点了?
B 九点。
A 哦，我要去上课了。
B 再见。

Traditional Chinese

- A 幾點了?
B 九點。
A 哦，我要去上課了。
B 再見。

Pinyin

- A Jǐ diǎn le?
B Jiǔ diǎn.
A Ō, wǒ yào qù shàngkè le.
B Zàijiàn.

English

- A What time is it?
B Nine o'clock.
A Oh, I have to go to class.
B See you.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
几点了	幾點了	jǐdiǎn le	what time is it
点	點	diǎn	o'clock
九	九	jiǔ	nine



哦	哦	ò	oh
要	要	yào	to be going to, have to
去	去	qù	to go
上课	上課	shàngkè	to attend class
再见	再見	zàijiàn	goodbye

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

现在几点了? 下午4点。	Xiànzài jǐ diǎn le? Xiàwǔ sì diǎn.	What time is it now? Four o'clock in the afternoon.
他爸爸一九八九年来美国。	Tā bàba yī jiǔ bā jiǔ nián lái Měiguó.	His dad came to America in 1989.
哦，没有洗手间! 明天我们要去杭州。	ò, méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān. Míngtiān wǒmen yào qù Hángzhōu.	Oh, there is no washroom! Tomorrow, we are going to Hangzhou.
我去公园。 你几点要上课?	Wǒ qù gōngyuán. Nǐ jǐ diǎn yào shàngkè?	I'm going to the park. What time do you have to go to class?
再见，我会想你。	Zàijiàn, wǒ huì xiǎng nǐ.	Goodbye, I'll miss you.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Asking and Telling the Time.

几点了?

"What time is it?"

To ask the time, you can use the phrase in this lesson's dialogue:

几点了?

Jǐ diǎn le?

"What time is it?"

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Here is some basic time-telling:

1. 九点。
Jiǔ diǎn
"Nine o'clock"
OR
2. 九点钟
Jiǔ diǎn zhōng
"Nine o'clock"

Either option is acceptable.

要... "To Have to Do Something"

哦，我要去上课了。
O, wǒ yào qù shàngkè le.
"Oh, I have to go to class."

The 要 (Yào), as used in this sentence pattern, is an auxiliary verb we use to talk about what one will do or what one is obliged to do in the future.



Absolute Beginner S1

Eating - What Do You Want to Eat?

6

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Pinyin	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
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Cultural Insight	4

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Simplified Chinese

- A 我饿了。
B 你想吃什么?
A 我想吃面条。
B 好。

Traditional Chinese

- A 我餓了。
B 你想吃什麼?
A 我想吃麵條。
B 好。

Pinyin

- A Wǒ è le.
B Nǐ xiǎng chī shénme?
A Wǒ xiǎng chī miàntiáo.
B Hǎo.

English

- A I'm hungry.
B What do you want to eat?
A I want to eat noodles.
B Okay.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
饿	餓	è	hungry
想	想	xiǎng	would like, to want
吃	吃	chī	to eat



什么	甚麼	shénme	what
面条	面條	miàntiáo	noodle
好	好	hǎo	good

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

我不饿。	Wǒ bù è.	I'm not hungry.
我想去看看。	Wǒ xiǎng qù kàn kàn	I want to have a look.
要吃什么？	Yào chī shénme?	What do you want to eat?
你说什么？	Nǐ shuō shénme?	What did you say?
这家餐厅面条很有名。	Zhè jiā cāntīng miàntiáo	The noodles at this
	hěn yǒumíng.	restaurant are very famous.
加州很好。	Jiāzhōu hěn hǎo.	California is very nice.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is, "Would Like, to Desire, to Want" – 想 (xiǎng)

你想吃什么？

"What do you want to eat?"

The verb 想 (xiǎng) has a few different meanings and usages. In this dialogue, a modal verb indicates the desire to do something.

我想吃面条。

Wǒ xiǎng chī miàntiáo.

"I want to eat noodles."

When used in this context, 想 (xiǎng) must be followed by a verb, a clause, or a sentence.

Using the Question Word 'What' – 什么 (shénme)

你想吃什么？

Nǐ xiǎng chī shénme?

"What do you want to eat?"

When using the question word "what" in a sentence, the word order is different than English. The "what" comes at the end, not at the beginning, as if it would in English. In Chinese, the order is like this: "You would like to eat what?"

Cultural Insight

The Quickest Way to a Chinese Friend's Heart...

The Chinese love their food, and love to share a meal with friends. In China, if someone invites you to a meal, it generally means that they are 'treating.' The quickest way to a Chinese friend's heart is to compliment the food. The Chinese are passionate about their cuisine and love to introduce the famous foods of their region to a foreign friend.



Absolute Beginner S1

Eating - Get Me to a Restaurant!

7

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Simplified Chinese

- A 不好意思，这儿有饭馆儿吗？
B 在那儿。
A 谢谢你。
B 不客气。

Traditional Chinese

- A 不好意思，這兒有飯館兒嗎？
B 在那兒。
A 謝謝你。
B 不客氣。

Pinyin

- A Bùhǎoyìsi, zhèr yǒu fànguǎnr ma?
B Zài nàr.
A Xièxie nǐ.
B Bù kèqì.

English

- A Excuse me, is there a restaurant around here?
B Over there.
A Thank you.
B You're welcome.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
不好意思	不好意思	bùhǎo yìsi	excuse me
这儿	這兒	zhèr	here
有	有	yǒu	to have



饭馆儿	飯館兒	fànguǎnr	restaurant
在	在	zài	at
那儿	那兒	nàr	there
谢谢你	謝謝你	xièxie nǐ	thank you
不客气	不客氣	bú kèqì	you're welcome

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

不好意思，请再说一遍，好吗？	Bùhǎoyìsi, qǐng zài shuō yī biàn, hǎo ma?	Sorry, please say that again, okay?
我在这儿。	Wǒ zài zhèr.	I'm here.
这儿有图书馆吗？	Zhèr yǒu túshūguǎn ma?	Is there a library around here?
这家饭馆儿很有名。	Zhè jiā fànguǎnr hěn yǒumíng.	This restaurant is really famous.
他在后面。	Tā zài hòumiàn.	He is in the back.
洗手间在那儿。	Xǐshǒujiān zài nàr.	The washroom is there.
谢谢你的礼物。	Xièxiè nǐ de lǐwù.	Thank you for your gift.
不客气。	Bù kèqì.	You're welcome.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 有 yǒu ("to express existence")

这儿有饭馆儿吗？

"Is there a restaurant around here?"

有 (Yǒu) is a verb that we can use to indicate existence (like "there is" or "there are" in English). Typically, a phrase indicating time or place will precede yǒu, as in our lesson dialogue:

这儿有饭馆儿吗？

Zhèr yǒu fànguǎnr ma?

"Is there a restaurant here?"

The pattern is:

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(time / place) + yǒu + (noun)

"at, in" - 在 (zài)

在 (zài) is a preposition we use to identify the location where an action takes place. In most cases, it precedes the verb phrase but follows after both the subject and time phrases. The location follows directly after the preposition在 (zài).

Cultural Insight

Never Far from a Place to Eat in China!

In China, you are never far from a restaurant. From large, posh restaurants to side of the road stalls, delicious food is always around the corner. It's always good to ask a local's opinion. Of course...they know where the good food is at!



Absolute Beginner S1

Eating - Ordering Noodles

8

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Traditional	2
Pinyin	2
English	2
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Simplified Chinese

- A 你点什么?
B 我们想吃面条。
A 你们都吃面条吗?
B 对。

Traditional Chinese

- A 你點什麼?
B 我們想吃麵條。
A 你們都吃麵條嗎?
B 對。

Pinyin

- A Nǐ diǎn shénme?
B Wǒmen xiǎng chī miàntiáo.
A Nǐmen dōu chī miàntiáo ma?
B Duì.

English

- A What do you want to order?
B We want to eat noodles.
A You both are having noodles?
B Yes.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
点	點	diǎn	to order (food)
都	都	dōu	all
我们	我們	wǒmen	we, us

你们	你們	nǐmen	you (plural)
什么	什麼	shénme	what
想	想	xiǎng	would like, to want
吃	吃	chī	to eat
对	對	duì	correct, right

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

你帮我点吧。	Nǐ bāng wǒ diǎn ba.	You order for me.
我们都喜欢他。	Wǒmen dōu xǐhuan tā.	We all like him.
我们都很好。	Wǒmen dōu hěn hǎo.	We are all very good.
你们来过吗？	Nǐmen lái guo ma?	Have you been here before?
你说什么？	Nǐ shuō shénme?	What did you say?
我想去看看。	Wǒ xiǎng qù kàn kàn	I want to have a look.
要吃什么？	Yào chī shénme?	What do you want to eat?
对，我是美国人。	Duì, wǒ shì Měiguórén.	Yes, I am American.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is "All, Both" - 都 (dōu)

你们都吃面条吗？

"You both are having noodles?"

都 (dōu) is an adverb we use to express the concept "all," or in the case of two things, "both," regarding the subject or the topic.

The sentence pattern is:

(subject) + dōu + (verb phrase)

Our lesson dialogue had an example of this kind of sentence:

你们都吃面条吗？

Nǐmen dōu chī miàntiáo ma?

"You both are eating noodles?"

Cultural Insight

Getting Their Attention in China!

To get a waiter/waitress's attention in China, you may need to learn the phrase 服务员 (fúwùyuán), which means "waiter." Most times, to get service in a restaurant, you will have to use this phrase to call the waiter over to your table for service. Don't be shy!





Absolute Beginner S1

Eating - Delicious!

9

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Pinyin	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
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Simplified Chinese

A 好吃吗?
B 嗯, 很好吃。
A 我吃饱了。
B 我也吃饱了。

Traditional Chinese

A 好吃嗎?
B 嗯, 很好吃。
A 我吃饱了。
B 我也吃饱了。

Pinyin

A Hǎochī ma?
B En, hěn hǎochī.
A Wǒ chī bǎo le.
B Wǒ yě chī bǎo le.

English

A Are they delicious?
B Yes, very delicious.
A I'm full.
B I'm full too.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
好吃	好吃	hǎochī	delicious
嗯	嗯	en	uh-huh, hmm, huh
很	很	hěn	very

吃饱了	吃飽了	chī bǎo le	full (of food)
也	也	yě	also, too
好	好	hǎo	good

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

这道菜很好吃！	Zhè dào cài hěn hǎo chī.	This dish is very delicious!
嗯？迈克？你怎么在这儿？	En? Mài kè? Nǐ zěnmē zài zhèr?	Huh? Mike? What are you doing here?
今天玩得很开心。	Jīntiān wán de hěn kāixīn.	Today was great fun.
咖啡也好。	Kāfēi yě hǎo.	Coffee is good too.
他也是澳大利亚人。	Tā yě shì Àodàlìyà rén.	He is also Australian.
加州很好。	Jiāzhōu hěn hǎo.	California is very nice.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is 也 (yě).

我也吃饱了

"I'm full too."

我也吃饱了。

Wǒ yě chī bǎo le.

"I'm full too."

The adverb 也 (yě) means "too" or "also." In Chinese, it comes after the subject (if any), and before the verb. The 也 (yě) cannot come before the subject or at the end of the sentence.

Another Example:

北京也很好。

Běijīng yě hěn hǎo.

"Beijing is nice too."

Cultural Insight

Dishing it Out in China!

Chinese people love to feed their guests--it's an important way of showing hospitality in Chinese culture. As long as you keep eating, plan to see your plate getting dished out with more food! Using 吃飽了 (chī bǎo le) is a good way to stem the flow of food coming your way.



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Thank You!

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