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LEVEL 1

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LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #1
Meeting - What's Your Name in Chinese?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

1

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你好。
2. B : 你好，你叫什么名字？
3. A : 我叫张林。
4. B : 我叫王小芳。

ENGLISH

1. A : Hello.
2. B : Hello, what's your name?
3. A : I'm Zhang Lin.
4. B : I'm Wang Xiaofang.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐhǎo.
2. B : Nǐhǎo, nǐ jiào shénme míngzì?
3. A : Wǒ jiào Zhāng Lín.
4. B : Wǒ jiào Wáng Xiǎofāng.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你好。
2. B : 你好，你叫什麼名字？
3. A : 我叫張林。
4. B : 我叫王小芳。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
我	我	wǒ	I, me	pronoun
你	你	nǐ	you	pronoun
什么	什麼	shénme	what	pronoun
叫	叫	jiào	to call	verb
名字	名字	míngzì	name	
你好	你好	nǐhǎo	hello	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我的朋友很帅。 *Wǒ de péngyǒu hěn shuài.* My friend is really handsome.	是你吗？ *Shì nǐ ma?* Is it you?
你午饭吃什么？ *Nǐ wǔfàn chī shénme?* What will you eat for lunch?	为什么？ *Wèishénme?* What for?
你说什么？ *Nǐ shuō shénme?* What did you say?	什么事儿？ *Shénme shìr?* What's the matter?
今年，我妹妹又出了一张专辑，叫《月光》。 *Jīnnián, wǒ mèimei yòu chū le yī zhāng zhuānjí, jiào Yuèguāng.* My sister put out another album this year, called "Moonlight."	我叫子安。 *Wǒ jiào Zǐ ān.* My name is Zi an.
你叫什么名字？ *Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?* What is your name?	你叫什么名字？ *Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?* What's your name?
我忘记了他的名字。 *Wǒ wàngjì le tā de míngzi.* I've forgotten his name.	你好，我想找安娜。 *Nǐhǎo, wǒ xiǎng zhǎo Ānnà.* Hello, can I speak to Anna?
你好，我叫王国易。 *Nǐhǎo, wǒ jiào Wáng Guóyì.* Hello, I'm Wang Guoyi.	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

你好 *(nǐhǎo)* / 您好 (*nínhǎo*) - "Hello" in Chinese is made up of two words: 你 (*nǐ*), meaning "you" and '好 (*hǎo*), meaning "good." On very formal meetings, you can replace the 你 (*nǐ*) with the formal term for "you," which is 您 (*nín*). 叫 (*jiào*) is literally the verb for "to call." So, as in the case of our dialogue, when you are saying, "My name is _____," in Chinese, actually you are saying "I'm called _____."

GRAMMAR

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 (*tāmen*)	"they, them"
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 míngzì?
"What is your name" (literally: "You called what name?")

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

CULTURAL INSIGHT

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. 张林
   Zhāng Lín
   (surname here is 张, given name is 林)
2. 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #2
Meeting in China - Where are You From?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#2

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你是哪国人？
2. 我是美国人。你呢？
3. 我是中国人。

ENGLISH

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

PINYIN

1. Nǐ shì nǎ guó rén?
2. Wǒ shì Měiguórén. Nǐ ne?
3. Wǒ shì Zhōngguórén.

TRADITIONAL

1. 你是哪國人？
2. 我是美國人。你呢？
3. 我是中國人。

VOCABULARY

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

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我叫张飞，你呢？ *Wǒ jiào Zhāng Fēi, nǐ ne?* My name is Zhang Fei, what about you?	她是美国人。 *Tā shì Měiguó rén.* She is American.
他们都是中国人。 *Tāmen dōu shì Zhōngguó rén.* They are all Chinese.	中国人很多。 *Zhōngguó rén hěn duō.* There are a lot of people in China.
我应该用哪把钥匙？ *Wǒ yīnggāi yòng nǎ bǎ yàoshi?* Which key should I use?	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?	他是我哥哥。 *Tā shì wǒ gēge.* He is my older brother.

GRAMMAR

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, *Měiguórén* ("American person")
3. 中国, *Zhōngguó* ("China")

4. 中国人, *Zhōngguórén* ("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 Běijīngrén.
   "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.

哪 (*nǎ*/*něi*) "Which"

To ask a person which country he/she is 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?"

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!

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #3
Meeting - China Conversation

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
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- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#3

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你喜欢中国吗？
2. B : 喜欢。
3. A : 你喜欢中国菜吗？
4. B : 也喜欢。

ENGLISH

1. A : Do you like China?
2. B : Yes, I like it.
3. A : Do you like Chinese food?
4. B : Yes, I like it too.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ xǐhuān Zhōngguó ma?
2. B : Xǐhuān.
3. A : Nǐ xǐhuān Zhōngguó cài ma?
4. B : Yě xǐhuān.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你喜歡中國嗎？
2. B : 喜歡。
3. A : 你喜歡中國菜嗎？
4. B : 也喜歡。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
也	也	yě	also, too	adverb
吗	嗎	ma	question marker	particle
喜欢	喜歡	xǐhuān	to like	verb
中国菜	中國菜	Zhōngguócài	Chinese food	noun
中国	中國	Zhōngguó	China	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

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.
你是加拿大人吗? *Nǐ shì Jiānádà rén ma?* Are you Canadian?	我喜欢中国菜。 *Wǒ xǐhuan Zhōngguó cài.* I like Chinese food.
中国菜很好吃。 *Zhōngguó cài hěn hǎochī.* Chinese food is delicious.	你去过中国吗? *Nǐ qù guò Zhōngguó ma?* Have you been to China before?

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

You can make a lot of words out of the word for China, in Chinese. You just add other terms onto the end to make Chinese things.

For Example:

1. 中国 - *Zhōngguó*
   "China"
2. 中国菜 - *Zhōngguó cài*
   "Chinese food"
3. 中国人 - *Zhōngguórén*
   "Chinese person"

GRAMMAR

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 Zhōngguórén 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 xǐhuān Zhōngguó ma?*
A: "Do you like China?"

B: 喜欢。
B: *Xǐhuān.*
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 xǐhuān.*
B: "I don't like it."

也 (*yě*)

B: 也喜欢。
B: *Yě xǐhuān.*
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:

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!

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #4
Meeting - Studying Chinese

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#4

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你是学生吗？
2. B : 对。 我学中文。你呢？
3. A : 我是老师。
4. B : 你可以教我中文！

ENGLISH

1. A : Are you a student?
2. B : Yes, I study Chinese. How about you?
3. A : I am a teacher.
4. B : You can teach me Chinese!

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ shì xuéshēng ma?
2. B : Duì. Wǒ xué Zhōngwén. Nǐ ne?
3. A : Wǒ shì lǎoshī.
4. B : Nǐ kěyǐ jiāo wǒ Zhōngwén!

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你是學生嗎？
2. B : 對。 我學中文。你呢？
3. A : 我是老師。
4. B : 你可以教我中文！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
中文	中文	Zhōngwén	Chinese (language)	noun
可以	可以	kěyǐ	can	verb
教	教	jiāo	to teach	verb
对	對	duì	correct	adjective
老师	老師	lǎoshī	teacher	noun
学生	學生	xuéshēng	student	noun
学	學	xué	to study	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我不学中文。 *Wǒ bù xué Zhōngwén.* I don't study Chinese.	你可以叫我丽丽。 *Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lìli.* You can call me Lili.
我教中文。 *Wǒ jiāo Zhōngwén.* I teach Chinese.	那是正确的。 *Nà shì zhèngquè de.* That is correct.
对，我是美国人。 *Duì, wǒ shì Měiguórén.* Yes, I am American.	这名老师正在教室里教孩子们。 *Zhè míng lǎoshī zhèngzài jiàoshì lǐ jiāo háizimen.* The teacher is teaching the kids in the classroom.
最喜欢的老师 *zuì xǐhuān de lǎoshī* favorite teacher	英语老师 *Yīngyǔ lǎoshī* English teacher
史密斯先生是我高中最喜欢的老师。 *Shǐmìsī xiānsheng shì wǒ gāozhōng zuì xǐhuān de lǎoshī.* Mr. Smith was my favorite high school teacher.	我们的法语老师在家说法语。 *Wǒmen de Fǎyǔ lǎoshī zài jiā shuō Fǎyǔ.* Our French teacher speaks the language at home.
张老师很忙。 *Zhāng lǎoshī hěn máng.* Teacher Zhang is very busy.	她是大学学生。 *Tā shì dàxué xuéshēng.* She is a university student.
你在学什么? *Nǐ zài xué shénme?* What are you studying?	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

对 *(duì)* "correct." There is no set way to say "yes" in Chinese. However, 对 (*duì*) often expresses an affirmative response.

GRAMMAR

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

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!

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #5
Meeting - Time for Class

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar

#5

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 几点了？
2. B : 九点。
3. A : 哦，我要去上课了。
4. B : 再见。

ENGLISH

1. A : What time is it?
2. B : Nine o'clock.
3. A : Oh, I have to go to class.
4. B : See you.

PINYIN

1. A : Jǐ diǎn le?
2. B : Jiǔ diǎn.
3. A : O, wǒ yào qù shàngkè le.
4. B : Zàijiàn.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 幾點了？
2. B : 九點。
3. A : 哦，我要去上課了。
4. B : 再見。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
九	九	jiǔ	nine	numeral
去	去	qù	to go	verb
要	要	yào	to be going to, have to	verb
点	點	diǎn	o'clock	noun
几点了	幾點了	jǐdiǎn le	what time is it	phrase
哦	哦	ò	oh	conjunction
再见	再見	zàijiàn	goodbye	phrase
上课	上課	shàngkè	to attend class	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

九层楼 *jiǔ céng lóu* nine floors	九号 *jiǔ hào* number nine
场上有九个队员。 *Chǎng shàng yǒu jiǔ ge duìyuán.* There are nine players on the field.	九件东西 *jiǔ jiàn dōngxi* nine things
外面的温度是九度。 *Wàimiàn de wēndù shì jiǔ dù.* The temperature outside is nine degrees.	九个等级 *jiǔ ge děngjí* nine degrees
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.	下周末谁去海边？ *Xià zhōumò shéi qù hǎibiān?* Who is going to the beach next weekend?
我去了动物医院。 *Wǒ qù le dòngwù yīyuàn.* I went to the animal hospital.	我去公园。 *Wǒ qù gōngyuán.* I go to the park.
明天我们要去杭州。 *Míngtiān wǒmen yào qù Hángzhōu.* Tomorrow we are going to Hangzhou.	学校下午三点放学。 *Xuéxiào xiàwǔ sān diǎn fàngxué.* School ends at 3 o’clock in the afternoon.
三点 *sān diǎn* 3 o’clock	我们九点在火车站见吧。 *Wǒmen jiǔ diǎn zài huǒchēzhàn jiàn ba.* Let's meet at the station at 9 o'clock.

你的朋友7点来的。 *Nǐ de péngyou qī diǎn lái de.* Your friends came at 7 o'clock.	下午4点。 *Xiàwǔ sì diǎn.* Four o'clock in the afternoon.
现在几点了？ *Xiànzài jǐ diǎn le?* What time is it now?	哦，没有洗手间！ *O, méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān.* Oh, there is no washroom!
再见，我会想你。 *Zàijiàn, wǒ huì xiǎng nǐ.* Goodbye, I'll miss you.	你几点要上课? *Nǐ jǐ diǎn yào shàngkè?* What time do you have to go to class?

GRAMMAR

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?"

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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #6
Eating - What Do You Want to Eat?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
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- Vocabulary
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#6

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 我饿了。
2. B : 你想吃什么？
3. A : 我想吃面条。
4. B : 好。

ENGLISH

1. A : I'm hungry.
2. B : What do you want to eat?
3. A : I want to eat noodles.
4. B : Okay.

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒ è le.
2. B : Nǐ xiǎng chī shénme?
3. A : Wǒ xiǎng chī miàntiáo.
4. B : Hǎo.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 我餓了。
2. B : 你想吃什麼？
3. A : 我想吃麵條。
4. B : 好。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
吃	吃	chī	to eat	verb
什么	什麼	shénme	what	pronoun
好	好	hǎo	good	adjective
想	想	xiǎng	would like, to want,love to	verb, phrase
饿	餓	è	hungry	adjective
面条	麵條	miàntiáo	noodle	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我想吃薯片。好吃。 *"Wǒ xiǎng chī shǔpiàn .hǎochī ."* I want to eat potato chips.Delicious.	她每天都吃很多蔬菜。 *tā měi tiān dōu chī hěn duō shūcài .* She eats a lot of vegetables every day.
要吃什么? *Yào chī shénme?* What do you want to eat?	你午饭吃什么？ *Nǐ wǔfàn chī shénme?* What will you eat for lunch?
为什么？ *Wèishénme?* What for?	你说什么？ *Nǐ shuō shénme?* What did you say?
什么事儿？ *Shénme shìr?* What's the matter?	她是个好人。 *Tā shì ge hǎorén.* She is a good person.
好吃的食物 *hǎochī de shíwù* good food	对身体好 *duì shēntǐ hǎo* good for one's body
蔬菜对你的身体好。 *Shūcài duì nǐ de shēntǐ hǎo.* Vegetables are good for you.	我感觉很好。 *wǒ gǎnjué hěn hǎo .* I feel good.
他真的是个很好的人，善良又大方。 *Tā zhēn de shì ge hěn hǎo de rén, shànliáng yòu dàfāng.* He is a really good person, kind and generous.	加州很好。 *Jiāzhōu hěn hǎo.* California is very nice.

我很想去但是太贵了。 *Wǒ hěn xiǎng qù dànshì tài guì le.* I would love to go but it is too expensive.	我想去看看。 *Wǒ xiǎng qù kànkan.* I want to have a look.
我不饿。 *Wǒ bú è* I'm not hungry.	这家餐厅面条很有名。 *Zhè jiā cāntīng miàntiáo hěn yǒumíng.* The noodles at this restaurant are very famous.

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

好 *(hǎo)* "good"
This is a very versatile word in Chinese. In the context of this lesson, we use it to acknowledge; much like "okay" or "all right."

我饿了。*(Wǒ è le.)* "I'm hungry."
This is a set phrase. Throw it out there, and there is sure to be someone offering to treat you to something delicious to eat!

GRAMMAR

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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #7
Eating - Get Me to a Restaurant!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

7

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 不好意思，这儿有饭馆儿吗？
2. B : 在那儿。
3. A : 谢谢你。
4. B : 不客气。

ENGLISH

1. A : Excuse me, is there a restaurant around here?
2. B : Over there.
3. A : Thank you.
4. B : You're welcome.

PINYIN

1. A : Bùhǎoyìsi, zhèr yǒu fànguǎnr ma?
2. B : Zài nàr.
3. A : Xièxie nǐ.
4. B : Bù kèqi

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 不好意思，這兒有飯館兒嗎？
2. B : 在那兒。
3. A : 謝謝你。
4. B : 不客氣。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
在	在	zài	at	
有	有	yǒu	to have	verb
不客气	不客氣	Bù kèqi	you're welcome	phrase
谢谢你	謝謝你	Xièxie nǐ	thank you	phrase
不好意思	不好意思	bùhǎo yìsi	excuse me	phrase, expression
这儿	這兒	zhèr	here	
饭馆儿	飯館兒	fànguǎnr	restaurant	noun
那儿	那兒	nàr	there	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

他在后面。 *Tā zài hòumiàn.* He is in the back.	我没有钱。 *Wǒ méiyǒu qián.* I have no money.
有电话吗？ *Yǒu diànhuà ma?* Do you have a phone?	他们院子里有太多垃圾了。 *Tāmen yuànzi lǐ yǒu tài duō lājī le.* They have too much garbage in their garden.
这儿有图书馆吗？ *Zhèr yǒu túshūguǎn ma?* Is there a library around here?	不客气。 *Bù kèqi* You're welcome.
谢谢你的礼物。 *Xièxie nǐ de lǐwù.* Thank you for your gift.	不好意思，你见过我的狗吗？ *Bùhǎo yìsi, nǐ jiàn guò wǒ de gǒu ma?* Excuse me, have you seen my dog?
不好意思，请再说一遍，好吗？ *Bùhǎo yìsi, qǐng zài shuō yī biàn, hǎo ma?* Excuse me, please say that again, okay?	我在这儿。 *Wǒ zài zhèr.* I'm here.
这家饭馆儿很有名。 *Zhè jiā fànguǎnr hěn yǒumíng.* This restaurant is really famous.	洗手间在那儿。 *Xǐshǒujiān zài nàr.* The washroom is there.

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Being polite in Chinese:
不好意思 (*Bùhǎoyìsi*) is a word that one can use to apologize or to excuse oneself. It is a good word to use to open a conversation when making an inquiry with a stranger.

謝謝你 (*Xièxie nǐ*) means "thank you." You can also just say 謝謝(*Xièxie*) for short.

Restaurants:
There are a few ways to refer to a restaurant in Chinese. Our dialogue uses 饭馆儿 (*fànguǎnr*), but at times you will hear other terms such as 饭店 (*fàndiàn*) or 餐厅 (*cāntīng*).

GRAMMAR

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:

(time / place) + *yǒu* + (noun)

在 (*zài*) "at, in"

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!

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #8
Eating - Ordering Noodles

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#8

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你点什么？
2. B : 我们想吃面条。
3. A : 你们都吃面条吗？
4. B : 对。

ENGLISH

1. A : What do you want to order?
2. B : We want to eat noodles.
3. A : You both are having noodles?
4. B : Yes.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ diǎn shénme?
2. B : Wǒmen xiǎng chī miàntiáo.
3. A : Nǐmen dōu chī miàntiáo ma?
4. B : Duì.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你點什麼？
2. B : 我們想吃面條。
3. A : 你們都吃面條嗎？
4. B : 對。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
吃	吃	chī	to eat	verb
什么	什麼	shénme	what	pronoun
想	想	xiǎng	would like, to want,love to	verb, phrase
对	對	duì	correct	adjective
我们	我們	wǒmen	we, us	pronoun
你们	你們	nǐmen	you (plural)	
都	都	dōu	all, both	adverb,adjective
点	點	diǎn	to order (food)	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我想吃薯片。好吃。 *"Wǒ xiǎng chī shǔpiàn .hǎochī ."* I want to eat potato chips.Delicious.	她每天都吃很多蔬菜。 *tā měi tiān dōu chī hěn duō shūcài .* She eats a lot of vegetables every day.
要吃什么? *Yào chī shénme?* What do you want to eat?	你午饭吃什么？ *Nǐ wǔfàn chī shénme?* What will you eat for lunch?
为什么？ *Wèishénme?* What for?	你说什么？ *Nǐ shuō shénme?* What did you say?
什么事儿？ *Shénme shìr?* What's the matter?	我很想去但是太贵了。 *Wǒ hěn xiǎng qù dànshì tài guì le.* I would love to go but it is too expensive.
我想去看看。 *Wǒ xiǎng qù kànkan.* I want to have a look.	那是正确的。 *Nà shì zhèngquè de.* That is correct.
对，我是美国人。 *Duì, wǒ shì Měiguórén.* Yes, I am American.	我们都很好。 *Wǒmen dōu hěn hǎo.* We are all very good.
你们来过吗？ *Nǐmen lái guò ma?* Have you been here before?	两本书都在打折。 *Liǎng běn shū dōu zài dǎzhé.* Both books are on sale.

我们都喜欢秋天。 *Wǒmen dōu xǐhuān qiūtiān.* We all like autumn.	我们都喜欢他。 *Wǒmen dōu xǐhuān tā.* We all like him.

你帮我点吧。

Nǐ bāng wǒ diǎn ba.

You order for me.

GRAMMAR

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!

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #9
Eating - Delicious!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#9

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 好吃吗？
2. B : 嗯，很好吃。
3. A : 我吃饱了。
4. B : 我也吃饱了。

ENGLISH

1. A : Are they delicious?
2. B : Yes, very delicious.
3. A : I'm full.
4. B : I'm full too.

PINYIN

1. A : Hǎochī ma?
2. B : En, hěn hǎochī.
3. A : Wǒ chī bǎo le.
4. B : Wǒ yě chī bǎo le.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 好吃嗎？
2. B : 嗯，很好吃。
3. A : 我吃飽了。
4. B : 我也吃飽了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
也	也	yě	also, too	adverb
好	好	hǎo	good	adjective
好吃	好吃	hǎochī	delicious	adjective
很	很	hěn	very, very much	adverb
嗯	嗯	en	uh-huh, hmm, huh	interjectory particle
吃饱了	吃飽了	chī bǎo le	full (of food)	expression

SAMPLE SENTENCES

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.
她是个好人。 *Tā shì ge hǎorén.* She is a good person.	好吃的食物 *hǎochī de shíwù* good food
对身体好 *duì shēntǐ hǎo* good for one's body	蔬菜对你的身体好。 *Shūcài duì nǐ de shēntǐ hǎo.* Vegetables are good for you.
我感觉很好。 *wǒ gǎnjué hěn hǎo .* I feel good.	他真的是个很好的人，善良又大方。 *Tā zhēn de shì ge hěn hǎo de rén, shànliáng yòu dàfāng.* He is a really good person, kind and generous.
加州很好。 *Jiāzhōu hěn hǎo.* California is very nice.	这个女的正在享受好吃的披萨。 *Zhège nǚ de zhèngzài xiǎngshòu hǎochī de pīsà.* The woman is enjoying delicious pizza.
这个披萨看起来很好吃。 *Zhège pīsà kànqǐlái hěn hǎochī.* The pizza looks delicious.	好吃的披萨 *hǎochī de pīsà* delicious pizza
这牛肉非常好吃。 *Zhè niúròu fēicháng hǎochī.* This beef is very delicious.	巧克力蛋糕很好吃。 *Qiǎokèlì dàngāo hěn hǎochī.* Chocolate cake is pretty delicious.

这道菜很好吃！ *Zhè dào cài hěn hǎochī!* This dish is very delicious!	今天玩得很开心。 *Jīntiān wán de hěn kāixīn.* Today was great fun.
嗯？迈克？ 你怎么在这儿？ *En? Màikè? Nǐ zěnme zài zhèr?* Huh? Mike? Why are you here?	吃饱了才能走。 *Chī bǎo le cái néng zǒu.* You can't leave until you are full.

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

吃饱了。(*chī bǎo le*) "I'm full!" is an important phrase to learn in Chinese. Chinese people love to keep feeding you, and as long as you keep eating, plan to see your plate getting dished out with more food! 嗯 (*en*) is a great catch-all acknowledgment word. Depending on the tone of voice, it can mean anything from a simple acknowledgment, like we have here, similar to "uh-huh" in English, to a more questioning "huh?" Listen for the tone of voice and context, and it will be easy to get which 嗯 (*en*) it is.

GRAMMAR

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 吃饱了 (*chī bǎo le*) is a good way to stem the flow of food coming your way.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #10
Eating - Waiter, the Bill!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#10

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 服务员，买单！
2. B : 您好，十八元。
3. A : 哇，真便宜！
4. B : 十八块钱！

ENGLISH

1. A : Waiter, the bill!
2. B : Hello. Eighteen RMB.
3. A : Wow, so cheap!
4. B : Eighteen RMB!

PINYIN

1. A : Fúwùyuán, mǎidān!
2. B : Nínhǎo, shíbā yuán.
3. A : Wa, zhēn piányì!
4. B : Shíbā kuài qián!

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 服務員，買單！
2. B : 您好，十八元。
3. A : 哇，真便宜！
4. B : 十八塊錢！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
十八	十八	shíbā	eighteen	numeral
买单	買單	mǎidān	to bring the check (at a restaurant)	phrase
便宜	便宜	piányì	inexpensive; cheap	adjective
块	塊	kuài	(measure word for money)	measure word
服务员	服務員	fúwùyuán	waiter	noun
元	元	yuán	main denomination of the RMB	
钱	錢	qián	money	noun
哇	哇	wa	wow	interjectory particle
真	真	zhēn	really	adverb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

十八年前 *shíbā nián qián* eighteen years ago	十八号 *shíbā hào* number eighteen
数字十八被写在门上。 *Shùzì shíbā bèi xiězài mén shàng.* The number eighteen is written on the door.	十八 *shíbā* 18
十八怎么样？ *Shíbā zěnmeyàng?* What about eighteen kuai?	服务员，买单！ *Fúwùyuán, mǎidān!* Waiter, the bill!
便宜一点儿，可以吗？ *Piányi yīdiǎnr, kěyǐ ma?* Can you make it a little cheaper?	这条裙子一百块钱。 *Zhè tiáo qúnzi yī bǎi kuài qián.* This skirt is a hundred kuai.
服务员，买单！ *Fúwùyuán, mǎidān!* Waiter, the bill!	一共二十元。 *Yígòng èrshí yuán.* All together, it's twenty RMB.
花钱 *huā qián* spend money	那个男人在付钱。 *Nàge nánrén zài fù qián.* The man is paying money.

美钞 *Měichāo* US paper money	付钱买东西 *fù qián mǎi dōngxi* pay money for goods
纸币 *zhǐbì* paper money	钱用来支付物品或服务。 *Qián yònglái zhīfù wùpǐn huò fúwù.* Money is used as payment for goods and services.
里面有钱的钱包 *lǐmian yǒu qián de qiánbāo* wallet with money inside	16块钱。 *Shíliù kuài qián.* Sixteen kuai.
哇，好多事情啊。 *Wa, hǎo duō shìqíng a.* Wow, so many things!	今天真热。 *Jīntiān zhēn rè.* It's really hot today.

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

服务员 *(Fúwùyuán)* "Waiter"
This is the standard term of address for a waiter in a restaurant in China. In some areas, a waitress will be referred to as 小姐 (*xiǎojie*), which means "Miss." However, in some areas, this term has a negative connotation, so 服务员 (*Fúwùyuán*) may be the better term to stick to.

买单 *(mǎidān)* "the bill"
In China, generally the waiter will not bring the bill until you use this term to ask for it.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Money Words
十八块钱！
"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*)

真 + (adjective)

真便宜！ *(zhēn piányì!)* "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 piányì
   "very cheap"
2. 非常便宜
   fēicháng piányì
   "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.

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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #11
Lights, Camera, Chinese Fame!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#11

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你是外国人吗？
2. B : 对不起，我听不懂。
3. A : 哦，你是外国人！
4. B : 我听不懂。

ENGLISH

1. A : Are you a foreigner?
2. B : I'm sorry, I don't understand.
3. A : Oh, you are a foreigner!
4. B : I don't understand.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ shì wàiguórén ma?
2. B : Duìbùqǐ,wǒ tīngbùdǒng.
3. A : O, nǐ shì wàiguórén!
4. B : Wǒ tīngbùdǒng.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你是外國人嗎？
2. B : 對不起，我聽不懂。
3. A : 哦，你是外國人！
4. B : 我聽不懂。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
听不懂	聽不懂	tīng bù dǒng	to not understand	verb
外国人	外國人	wàiguórén	foreigner	noun
对不起	對不起	duìbùqǐ	I'm sorry	phrase
是	是	shì	to be	
哦	哦	ò	oh	conjunction

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我听不懂，请再说一遍，好吗？ *Wǒ tīng bù dǒng, qǐng zài shuō yī biàn, hǎo ma?* I cannot understand. Please say it again, OK?	你说的话我听不懂。 *Nǐ shuō de huà wǒ tīng bù dǒng.* I don't understand what you are saying.
外国人要学好汉语声调很困难。 *Wàiguórén yào xué hǎo Hànyǔ shēngdiào hěn kùnnan.* It is difficult for a foreigner to learn Chinese tones well.	对不起，我很忙。 *Duìbuqǐ, wǒ hěn máng.* Sorry, I'm very busy.
她老公是医生。 *Tā lǎogōng shì yīshēng.* Her husband is a doctor.	哦，没有洗手间！ *O, méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān.* Oh, there is no washroom!

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

对不起 (*duìbùqǐ*) is another word you can use to apologize or excuse yourself in Chinese. We generally use it interchangeably with 不好意思 (*bùhǎoyìsi*). 外国人, *wàiguórén* ("foreigner")—you are likely to hear this word a lot as you walk the streets of China. Sometimes you will even hear people call it out to you or others as you pass. The Chinese are very curious about foreigners, and the smaller the city, the more attention you will garner, so be prepared! We use 听不懂 (*tīngbùdǒng*) specifically when speaking of 'not understanding' something you heard.

GRAMMAR

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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #12
The Great Chinese Potty Dilemma

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#12

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 洗手间在哪儿？
2. B : 没有洗手间。
3. A : 没有洗手间？
4. B : 没有。

ENGLISH

1. A : Where is the bathroom?
2. B : We don't have a bathroom.
3. A : You don't have a bathroom?
4. B : No, we don't.

PINYIN

1. A : Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?
2. B : Méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān.
3. A : Méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān?
4. B : Méiyǒu.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 洗手間在哪兒？
2. B : 沒有洗手間。
3. A : 沒有洗手間？
4. B : 沒有。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
洗手间	洗手間	xǐshǒujiān	bathroom	noun
哪儿	哪兒	nǎr	where	pronoun
在	在	zài	at	
没有	沒有	méiyǒu	to not have	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

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

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

洗手间 (*xǐshǒujiān)* "washroom/bathroom" literally means, "wash hands room." You can also use the term 厕所 *(cèsuǒ)* "toilet" to inquire after the facilities.

GRAMMAR

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?"

没有洗手间。(*Méiyǒu xǐshǒujiān)* "We don't have a bathroom."
没有 (*méiyǒu*), 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #13 Essentials - Let Me Through!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#13

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 对不起，让一下。
2. B : 嗯？
3. A : 请让一下。
4. B : 哦，对不起。

ENGLISH

1. A : Excuse me, let me through.
2. B : Huh?
3. A : Please let me through.
4. B : Oh, sorry.

PINYIN

1. A : Duìbùqǐ, ràng yíxià.
2. B : En?
3. A : Qǐng ràng yíxià.
4. B : O, duìbùqǐ.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 對不起，讓一下。
2. B : 嗯？
3. A : 請讓一下。
4. B : 哦，對不起。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
让一下	讓一下	ràng yíxià	let (me) through	phrase
请	請	qǐng	please	
对不起	對不起	duìbùqǐ	sorry, excuse me	expression
嗯	嗯	en	uh-huh, hmm, huh	interjectory particle

SAMPLE SENTENCES

不好意思，让一下。 *Bùhǎoyìsi, ràng yíxià.* Sorry, can you let me through?	哦，不好意思，请坐。 *O, bùhǎo yìsi, qǐng zuò.* Oh, sorry! Please sit.
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?	嗯？迈克？ 你怎么在这儿？ *En? Màikè? Nǐ zěnme zài zhèr?* Huh? Mike? Why are you here?

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

对不起 (*duìbùqǐ*) is another word you can use to apologize or excuse yourself in Chinese. We generally use it interchangeably with 不好意思 (*bùhǎoyìsi*).

GRAMMAR

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:

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

CULTURAL INSIGHT

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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #14
Essentials - Can You Write That Down?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#14

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 我们想去北海公园，你知道在哪儿吗？
2. B : 知道。
3. A : 你可以写一下吗？
4. B : 当然。
5. A : 谢谢。

ENGLISH

1. A : We want to go to Beihai Park; do you know where it is?
2. B : Yes.
3. A : Can you write it down?
4. B : Of course.
5. A : Thanks.

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒmen xiǎng qù Běihǎi Gōngyuán, nǐ zhīdào zài nǎr ma?
2. B : Zhīdào.
3. A : Nǐ kěyǐ xiě yíxià ma?
4. B : Dāngrán.
5. A : Xièxie.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 我們想去北海公園，你知道在哪兒嗎？
2. B : 知道。
3. A : 你可以寫一下嗎？
4. B : 當然。
5. A : 謝謝。

VOCABULARY

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

SAMPLE SENTENCES

稍等，我出去一下。 *Shāoděng, wǒ chūqù yīxià.* Hold on, I'm stepping outside for a minute.	你等我一下。 *Nǐ děng wǒ yíxià.* Wait for me a moment.
你们去哪儿？ *Nǐmen qù nǎr?* Where are you going?	你可以叫我丽丽。 *Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lìli.* You can call me Lili.
他在后面。 *Tā zài hòumiàn.* He is in the back.	我很想去但是太贵了。 *Wǒ hěn xiǎng qù dànshì tài guì le.* I would love to go but it is too expensive.
我想去看看。 *Wǒ xiǎng qù kànkan.* I want to have a look.	你知道她的名字吗？ *Nǐ zhīdào tā de míngzi ma?* Do you know her name?
也许我们永远不会知道这个习惯是来源于哪里。 *Yěxǔ wǒmen yǒngyuǎn bù huì zhīdào zhège xíguàn shì láiyuán yú nǎlǐ.* We will probably never know the origins of this habit.	我知道问题的答案。 *Wǒ zhīdào wèntí de dá'àn.* I know the answer to the question.

你知道他是谁吗？ *Nǐ zhīdào tā shì shéi ma?* Do you know who he is?	你写字很漂亮。 *Nǐ xiězì hěn piàoliang.* You write so beautifully.
我当然喜欢！ *Wǒ dāngrán xǐhuān!* Of course I like it!	我去宾馆。 *Wǒ qù bīnguǎn.* I'm going to the hotel.

我们周末去北海公园吧。

Wǒmen zhōumò qù Běihǎi gōngyuán ba.

How about we go to Beihai Park on the weekend?

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

北海公园 (*Běihǎi gōngyuán*) is a famous park northwest of the Forbidden City in Beijing.

GRAMMAR

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 yīxià*) "Write it down."
Tacked onto the end of a verb, 一下 (*yīxià*) softens the tone of a statement. It is more polite. Some other commonly used expressions using 一下 (*yīxià*) are:

1. 看一下
   kàn yīxià
   "Have a look."
2. 听一下
   tīng yīxià
   "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?
   "Do you know where it is?"
2. 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!

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #15 Essentials - No, Thanks!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#15

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 来，尝一尝。
2. B : 不要，谢谢。
3. A : 来吧。 很好吃。
4. B : 我不要。

ENGLISH

1. A : Come, have a taste.
2. B : I don't want any, thanks.
3. A : Come on. It's delicious.
4. B : I don't want it.

PINYIN

1. A : Lái, chángyìcháng.
2. B : Bù yào, xièxie.
3. A : Lái ba. Hěn hǎochī.
4. B : Wǒ bù yào.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 來，嘗一嘗。
2. B : 不要，謝謝。
3. A : 來吧。 很好吃。
4. B : 我不要。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
要	要	yào	to want	verb
好吃	好吃	hǎochī	delicious	adjective
很	很	hěn	very, very much	adverb
不	不	bù	(negative prefix)	adverb
吧	吧	ba	(particle; denotes suggestion)	particle
来	來	lái	to come	verb
尝	嘗	cháng	to taste	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

他要一张纸。 *Tā yào yī zhāng zhǐ.* He wants a piece of paper.	这个女的正在享受好吃的披萨。 *Zhège nǚ de zhèngzài xiǎngshòu hǎochī de pīsà.* The woman is enjoying delicious pizza.
这个披萨看起来很好吃。 *Zhège pīsà kànqǐlái hěn hǎochī.* The pizza looks delicious.	好吃的披萨 *hǎochī de pīsà* delicious pizza
这牛肉非常好吃。 *Zhè niúròu fēicháng hǎochī.* This beef is very delicious.	巧克力蛋糕很好吃。 *Qiǎokèlì dàngāo hěn hǎochī.* Chocolate cake is pretty delicious.
这道菜很好吃！ *Zhè dào cài hěn hǎochī!* This dish is very delicious!	今天玩得很开心。 *Jīntiān wán de hěn kāixīn.* Today was great fun.
我不认识他。 *Wǒ bú rènshí tā.* I don't know him.	好，我点吧。 *Hǎo, wǒ diǎn ba.* Okay, I'll order.
他今天晚上来。 *Tā jīntiān wǎnshàng lái.* He is coming tonight.	尝尝这个。 *Chángcháng zhège.* Have a taste of this.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Reduplication of Verbs
尝一尝
chángyìcháng
"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 yí kàn* ("to have a look" or "to look a little bit"). Disyllabic verbs are repeated one after the other without 一 *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*].

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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #16

Getting Around: Finding the Subway in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#16

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 请问，地铁在哪儿？
2. B : 在前面。
3. A : 远吗？
4. B : 不远。

ENGLISH

1. A : Excuse me, where is the subway?
2. B : Up ahead.
3. A : Is it far?
4. B : Not far.

PINYIN

1. A : Qǐngwèn, dìtiě zài nǎr?
2. B : Zài qiánmiàn.
3. A : Yuǎn ma?
4. B : Bù yuǎn.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 請問，地鐵在哪兒？
2. B : 在前面。
3. A : 遠嗎？
4. B : 不遠。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
地铁	地鐵	dìtiě	subway	noun
在	在	zài	at	
请问	請問	qǐng wèn	may I ask	
前面	前面	qiánmiàn	in front	prepositional phrase
远	遠	yuǎn	far	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我坐地铁去办公室。 *Wǒ zuò dìtiě qù bàngōngshì.* I take the subway to the office.	坐地铁去，很方便。 *Zuò dìtiě qù, hěn fāngbiàn.* Taking the subway is really convenient.
他在后面。 *Tā zài hòumiàn.* He is in the back.	请问您贵姓？ *Qǐng wèn nín guìxìng?* May I ask your surname?
请问，你是不是王先生？ *Qǐng wèn, nǐ shì bù shì Wáng xiānsheng?* May I ask, are you Mr. Wang?	你在我的前面。 *Nǐ zài wǒ de qiánmiàn.* You're in front of me.
从你家到教堂有多远？ *Cóng nǐ jiā dào jiàotáng yǒu duō yuǎn?* How far is it from your house to the church?	车站离这里很远。 *Chēzhàn lí zhèli hěn yuǎn.* The station is far from here.
我看不见，太远了。 *Wǒ kàn bù jiàn, tài yuǎn le.* I can't see it, it's too far away.	我家离这里很远。 *Wǒ jiā lí zhèlǐ hěn yuǎn.* My house is very far from here.

GRAMMAR

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:

1. 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 (*nǎlǐ*). They are interchangeable.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Transport in Major Chinese Cities

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 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #17

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

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#17

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 到南京路吗？
2. B : 不到。七路车到。
3. A : 车票多少钱？
4. B : 两块钱。

ENGLISH

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

PINYIN

1. A : Dào nánjīng lù ma?
2. B : Bú dào. Qī lù chē dào.
3. A : Chēpiào duōshǎo qián?
4. B : Liǎng kuài qián.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 到南京路嗎？
2. B : 不到。七路車到。
3. A : 車票多少錢？
4. B : 兩塊錢。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
七	七	qī	seven	numeral
钱	錢	qián	money	noun
到	到	dào	to arrive	verb
车	車	chē	vehicle	noun
多少	多少	duōshǎo	how much, how many	phrase
块	塊	kuài	(measure word for money)	measure word
南京	南京	Nánjīng	Nanjing	proper noun
路	路	lù	road, way	noun
两	兩	liǎng	two	numeral
车票	車票	chēpiào	bus ticket	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

七个小矮人 *qī gè xiǎoǎirén* seven dwarfs	七号 *qī hào* number seven
一个星期有七天。 *Yí gè xīngqī yǒu qī tiān.* One week has seven days.	七个等级 *qī ge děngjí* seven degrees
我说好和我的朋友下午7点见面。 *Wǒ shuō hǎo hé wǒ de péngyou xiàwǔ qī diǎn jiànmiàn.* I'm going to meet my friend at 7 p.m.	七件东西 *qī jiàn dōngxi* seven things
一周七天 *yì zhōu qī tiān* seven days a week	我们的公司有七个人。 *Wǒmen de gōngsī yǒu qī ge rén.* There are seven people in our company.
花钱 *huā qián* spend money	那个男人在付钱。 *Nàge nánrén zài fù qián.* The man is paying money.
美钞 *Měichāo* US paper money	付钱买东西 *fù qián mǎi dōngxi* pay money for goods

纸币 *zhǐbì* paper money	钱用来支付物品或服务。 *Qián yònglái zhīfù wùpǐn huò fúwù.* Money is used as payment for goods and services.
里面有钱的钱包 *lǐmian yǒu qián de qiánbāo* wallet with money inside	16块钱。 *Shíliù kuài qián.* Sixteen kuai.
从这边到那边要多久？ *Cóng zhèbiān dào nàbiān yào duōjiǔ?* How long does it take to go from here to there?	我们所有的运货车用的都是汽油。 *Wǒmen suǒyǒu de yùnhuòchē yòng de dōu shì qìyóu.* All of our delivery vehicles run on gasoline.
你最喜欢用的交通工具是什么？ *Nǐ zuì xǐhuan yòng de jiāotōng gōngjù shì shénme?* What kind of vehicle do you enjoy riding the most?	你会开车吗？ *Nǐ huì kāi chē ma?* Do you know how to drive a car?
这个多少钱？ *Zhège duōshǎo qián?* How much is this?	这条裙子一百块钱。 *Zhè tiáo qúnzi yī bǎi kuài qián.* This skirt is a hundred kuai.
南京是一个历史悠久的城市。 *Nánjīng shì yī ge lìshǐ yōujiǔ de chéngshì.* Nanjing is a city with a long history.	下一站是南京路。 *Xià yí zhàn shì Nánjīng lù.* Next stop is Nanjing Road.
我每天都要花四个小时在上下班的路上。 *Wǒ měi tiān dōu yào huā sì ge xiǎoshí zài shàngxiàbān de lùshang.* I have to spend four hours on the way to and from work.	淮海路在哪儿？ *Huáihǎi lù zài nǎr?* Where is Huai Hai Road?
给我两块巧克力。 *Gěi wǒ liǎng kuài qiǎokèlì.* Give me two pieces of chocolate.	车票多少钱？ *Chēpiào duōshǎo qián?* How much is the bus fare?

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

The word for road in Chinese is 路 (*lù*). The word for street is 街 (*jiē*). The way to describe a bus route/number in Chinese is "bus number + 路车" (bus number + *lù chē*).

GRAMMAR

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

多少, (duōshǎo) "How much"

多少(*duōshǎo*) 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #18

Getting Around in China: How Do I Get Home?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#18

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 我怎么回家？
2. B : 你可以坐出租车。
3. A : 这儿有地铁站吗？
4. B : 地铁站有点儿远。

ENGLISH

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

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒ zěnme huíjiā?
2. B : Nǐ kěyǐ zuò chūzūchē.
3. A : Zhèr yǒu dìtiě zhàn ma?
4. B : Dìtiě zhàn yǒu diǎnr yuǎn.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 我怎麼回家？
2. B : 你可以坐出租車。
3. A : 這兒有地鐵站嗎？
4. B : 地鐵站有點兒遠。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
可以	可以	kěyǐ	can	verb
站	站	zhàn	station	noun
地铁	地鐵	dìtiě	subway	noun
一点儿	一點兒	yīdiǎn er	a little	phrase
怎么	怎麼	zěnme	how	adverb
这儿	這兒	zhèr	here	pronoun
有	有	yǒu	to have	verb
出租车	出租車	chūzū chē	taxi	noun
远	遠	yuǎn	far	adjective
坐	坐	zuò	to sit	verb
回	回	huí	to return	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你可以叫我丽丽。 *Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lìli.* You can call me Lili.	这一站是什么？ *Zhè yī zhàn shì shénme?* What stop is this?
我坐地铁去办公室。 *Wǒ zuò dìtiě qù bàngōngshì.* I take the subway to the office.	坐地铁去，很方便。 *Zuò dìtiě qù, hěn fāngbiàn.* Taking the subway is really convenient.
他只会说一点儿。 *Tā zhǐ huì shuō yīdiǎnr.* He can only speak a little.	你们怎么说…… *Nǐmen zěnme shuō .....* how do you say…
你们怎么用这个？ *Nǐmen zěnme yòng zhège?* How do you use this?	告诉我怎么用遥控器。 *Gàosù wǒ zěnme yòng yáokòngqì.* Tell me how to use the remote control.
你的工作怎么样？ *Nǐ de gōngzuò zěnmeyàng?* How is your work?	他怎么受伤了？ *Tā zěnme shòushāng le?* How did he get injured?
中文怎么说? *Zhōngwén zěnme shuō?* How do you say it in Chinese?	我住在这儿。 *Wǒ zhù zài zhèr.* I live here.

我没有钱。 *Wǒ méiyǒu qián.* I have no money.	有电话吗？ *Yǒu diànhuà ma?* Do you have a phone?
他们院子里有太多垃圾了。 *Tāmen yuànzi lǐ yǒu tài duō lājī le.* They have too much garbage in their garden.	这儿有图书馆吗？ *Zhèr yǒu túshūguǎn ma?* Is there a library around here?
坐出租车方便，但不便宜。 *Zuò chūzūchē fāngbiàn , dàn bù piányi.* Taking a taxi is convenient, but not cheap.	乘坐出租车 *chéngzuò chūzūchē* taxi cab ride
黄色出租车 *huángsè chūzūchē* yellow taxi	女人在上出租车。 *Nǚrén zài shàng chūzūchē.* The woman is getting in a taxi.
坐出租车 *zuò chūzūchē* take a taxi	上出租车 *shàng chūzūchē* get in a taxi
哪儿有出租车？ *Nǎr yǒu chūzūchē?* Where can I get a taxi?	从你家到教堂有多远？ *Cóng nǐ jiā dào jiàotáng yǒu duō yuǎn?* How far is it from your house to the church?
车站离这里很远。 *Chēzhàn lí zhèli hěn yuǎn.* The station is far from here.	我看不见，太远了。 *Wǒ kàn bù jiàn, tài yuǎn le.* I can't see it, it's too far away.
我家离这里很远。 *Wǒ jiā lí zhèlǐ hěn yuǎn.* My house is very far from here.	我们坐出租车吧。 *Wǒmen zuò chūzūchē ba.* Let's take a taxi.
地球太危险了，我要回火星了。 *dìqiú tài wēi xiǎn le , Wǒ yào huíhuǒ xīng le .* The earth is too dangerous, I will return back to mars.	我希望我儿子在我睡觉前能回家。 *Wǒ xīwàng wǒ érzi zài wǒ shuìjiào qián néng huíjiā.* I'd like my son to return home before I go to bed.
他什么时候回来？ *Tā shénme shíhou huílái?* When does he come back?	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

远 (*yuǎn*) - we learned the word for "far" in this dialogue; the word for "near" is 近 (*jìn*). 坐出租车 (*zuò chūzūchē*) means "take a taxi"; we also use the verb 坐 (*zuò*) when speaking of taking a bus, train, etc. 坐公交车, 坐火车 (*zuò gōngjiāochē, zuò huǒchē*).

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 怎么 (*Zěnme*) "How"
我怎么回家？
"How do I get home?"

怎么 *(Zěnme*) 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 (*Zěnme*) is:

(subject) + *zěnme* + (verb phrase)

For Example:

1. 我怎么回家？
   Wǒ zěnme 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)

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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #19
Getting Around China - I Want to Go Here!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#19

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你想去哪儿？
2. B : 我想去学院路。
3. A : 什么路？
4. B : 看这儿。
5. A : 哦，我知道了。学院路。好的。

ENGLISH

1. A : Where do you want to go?
2. B : I want to go to Xueyuan Road.
3. A : What road?
4. B : Look here.
5. A : Oh, I know. Xueyuan Road. Okay.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ xiǎng qù nǎr?
2. B : Wǒ xiǎng qù Xuéyuàn Lù.
3. A : Shénme lù?
4. B : Kàn zhèr.
5. A : O, wǒ zhīdào le. Xuéyuàn Lù. Hǎo de.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你想去哪兒？
2. B : 我想去學院路。
3. A : 甚麼路？
4. B : 看這兒。
5. A : 哦，我知道了。學院路。好的。

VOCABULARY

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

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你们去哪儿？ *Nǐmen qù nǎr?* Where are you going?	下周末谁去海边？ *Xià zhōumò shéi qù hǎibiān?* Who is going to the beach next weekend?
我去了动物医院。 *Wǒ qù le dòngwù yīyuàn.* I went to the animal hospital.	我去公园。 *Wǒ qù gōngyuán.* I go to the park.
我很想去但是太贵了。 *Wǒ hěn xiǎng qù dànshì tài guì le.* I would love to go but it is too expensive.	我想去看看。 *Wǒ xiǎng qù kànkan.* I want to have a look.
你在说什么？ *Nǐ zài shuō shénme?* What are you talking about?	你说什么呢? *Nǐ shuō shénme ne?* What did you say?
我每天都要花四个小时在上下班的路上。 *Wǒ měi tiān dōu yào huā sì ge xiǎoshí zài shàngxiàbān de lùshang.* I have to spend four hours on the way to and from work.	淮海路在哪儿？ *Huáihǎi lù zài nǎr?* Where is Huai Hai Road?
我知道这件事。 *Wǒ zhīdào zhè jiàn shì.* I know about this.	这儿有人吗？ *Zhèr yǒu rén ma?* Is there anyone here?

她不停地在看屏幕。 *tā bùtíng de zài kàn píngmù .* She couldn't stop looking at the screen.	你看，这儿有一只鸟。 *Nǐ kàn, zhèr yǒu yī zhī niǎo.* Look, there is a bird here.

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

你想去哪儿？(*Nǐ xiǎng qù nǎr?*)
Sometimes for short, the taxi driver will simply say '去哪儿？' (*Qù nǎr?*)

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 想, *xiǎng* ("would like," "to desire," "to want")
我想去学院路。
"I want to go to Xueyuan 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.
   "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 (*nǎlǐ*). 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)."

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!

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #20

Getting Around - Asking Directions in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#20

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 去天安门怎么走？
2. B : 直走，然后左转。
3. A : 好的，直走，然后左转。
4. B : 在你的右边。

ENGLISH

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

PINYIN

1. A : Qù Tiān'ānmén zěnme zǒu?
2. B : Zhí zǒu, ránhòu zuǒzhuǎn.
3. A : Hǎo de, zhí zǒu, ránhòu zuǒzhuǎn.
4. B : Zài nǐ de yòubiān.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 去天安門怎麼走？
2. B : 直走，然後左轉。
3. A : 好的，直走，然後左轉。
4. B : 在你的右邊。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
天安门	天安門	Tiān'ānmén	Tian'anmen	noun
怎么	怎麼	zěnme	how	adverb
走	走	zǒu	walk	verb
左	左	zuǒ	left	noun
右	右	yòu	right	noun
转	轉	zhuǎn	to turn	noun
右边	右邊	yòubiān	on the right	prepositional phrase
直	直	zhí	straight	adverb/adjective, adv
然后	然後	ránhòu	and then, next	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

天安门广场上很拥挤。 *Tiān'ānmén guǎngchǎng shàng hěn yōngjǐ.* It is very crowded in Tian'anmen Square.	你们怎么说…… *Nǐmen zěnme shuō .....* how do you say…
你们怎么用这个？ *Nǐmen zěnme yòng zhège?* How do you use this?	告诉我怎么用遥控器。 *Gàosù wǒ zěnme yòng yáokòngqì.* Tell me how to use the remote control.
你的工作怎么样？ *Nǐ de gōngzuò zěnmeyàng?* How is your work?	他怎么受伤了？ *Tā zěnme shòushāng le?* How did he get injured?
中文怎么说? *Zhōngwén zěnme shuō?* How do you say it in Chinese?	我们走吧。 *Wǒmen zǒu ba.* Let's go.
直走，然后在第二个十字交叉路口左转。 *Zhí zǒu, ránhòu zài dì-èr gè shízì jiāochā lùkǒu zuǒ zhuǎn.* Go straight, and then turn left at the second intersection.	它在左边。 *Tā zài zuǒbiān.* It's on the left side.
我家在左边。 *Wǒ jiā zài zuǒbiān.* My house is on the left.	在下一个交通灯处右转。 *zài xiàyígè jiāotōngdēng chù yòu zhuǎn.* Turn right at the next light.

靠右边停。 *Kào yòubiān tíng.* Stop on the right.	这里要右转。 *Zhèlǐ yào yòu zhuǎn.* Turn right here.
靠右边停。 *Kào yòubiān tíng.* Stop on the right.	这条路一直走。 *Zhè tiáo lù yīzhí zǒu.* Go straight down this road.
往前走。 *Wǎng qián zǒu.* Go straight.	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

(place) + 怎么走？ (place + *zěnme zǒu?*)
This is a great phrase to memorize to ask directions anywhere. For "turn left" or "turn right," some speakers prefer to say 右拐 (*yòuguǎi*) and 左拐 (*zuǒguǎi*), respectively.

GRAMMAR

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*)
5. 我们的 (*wǒmen de*)
6. 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."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

A Famous Chinese Landmark

Tiananmen Square is one of the most recognizable landmarks in all of China. It sits at the center of Beijing, directly across from the Forbidden City. Tiananmen Square is the largest city square in the world measuring 440,000 sq. meters. Close to the center of the square is Mao Zedong's mausoleum, with The Monument to the People's Heroes located in front. Every sunrise, and sunset there is a flag raising, and lowering ceremony. Soldiers march out to the flagpole, all the while attracting tourists gaze. Along the western side of the square is the Great Hall of the People, where national congresses take place, along with other dignitary events.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #21
Buying - This and That in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#21

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 这个多少钱？
2. B : 十五块钱。
3. A : 那个呢？
4. B : 十九块钱。
5. A : 好, 我买这个。

ENGLISH

1. A : How much is this one?
2. B : Fifteen RMB.
3. A : What about that one?
4. B : Nineteen RMB.
5. A : Okay, I'll buy this one.

PINYIN

1. A : Zhègè duōshǎo qián?
2. B : Shíwǔ kuài qián.
3. A : Nàgè ne?
4. B : Shíjiǔ kuài qián.
5. A : Hǎo, wǒ mǎi zhègè.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 這個多少錢？
2. B : 十五塊錢。
3. A : 那個呢？
4. B : 十九塊錢。
5. A : 好, 我買這個。

VOCABULARY

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

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我还没吃晚饭。你呢？ *Wǒ hái méi chī wǎnfàn. Nǐ ne?* I haven't had dinner yet. What about you?	你说什么呢? *Nǐ shuō shénme ne?* What did you say?
我是美国人。你呢？ *Wǒ shì Měiguórén. Nǐ ne?* I'm American. And you?	我的祖母给了我这个钱包。 *Wǒ de zǔmǔ gěi le wǒ zhège qiánbāo.* My grandmother gave me this wallet.
尝尝这个。 *Chángcháng zhège.* Have a taste of this.	花钱 *huā qián* spend money
那个男人在付钱。 *Nàge nánrén zài fù qián.* The man is paying money.	美钞 *Měichāo* US paper money
付钱买东西 *fù qián mǎi dōngxi* pay money for goods	纸币 *zhǐbì* paper money

钱用来支付物品或服务。 *Qián yònglái zhīfù wùpǐn huò fúwù.* Money is used as payment for goods and services.	里面有钱的钱包 *lǐmian yǒu qián de qiánbāo* wallet with money inside
16块钱。 *Shíliù kuài qián.* Sixteen kuai.	那是什么？ *Nà shì shénme?* What is that?
我有四个孩子。 *Wǒ yǒu sì ge háizi.* I have four children.	我要买那本书。 *Wǒ yào mǎi nà běn shū.* I want to buy that book.
这个多少钱？ *Zhège duōshǎo qián?* How much is this?	这条裙子一百块钱。 *Zhè tiáo qúnzi yī bǎi kuài qián.* This skirt is a hundred kuai.
十五块怎么样？ *Shíwǔ kuài zěnmeyàng?* What about fifteen kuai?	这儿有十九本书。 *Zhèr yǒu shíjiǔ běn shū.* There are 19 books here.

GRAMMAR

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?"

---

1. 这个多少钱？
   Zhègè duōshǎo qián?
   "How much is this one?"
2. 那个呢？
   Nàgè 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 - *zhègè* / *nàgè*).

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？
   Zhègè duōshǎo qián?)
   "How much is this one?"
2. 那个呢？
   Nàgè 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.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Money in China

The national currency of China is the 人民币 rénmínbì or Yuan. The People's Bank of China acts like the Federal Reserve of the United States, controlling the minting, and relative price of the Yuan.
As far as the currency itself is concerned, the notes range from 一角 yì jiǎo (one tenth of 1 RMB) to 100人民币 notes. The Chinese language has an embedded feature to prevent forgeries. On Chinese notes, 壹佰 is written as 一百. If 一百 were used in bank statements, it would be much easier to change the amount by adding a stroke such as 二百，or 三百.
Chinese notes have one common feature between them all. They all feature the founder of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong. Usually on the back of the note, there is a geographically, or culturally significant picture that represents diversity, and beauty in China.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #22
Buying - Get a Better Price in China!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#22

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 二十块钱？太贵了！
2. B : 不贵。
3. A : 便宜一点儿吧。
4. B : 十块怎么样？
5. A : 好的。

ENGLISH

1. A : Twenty RMB? That's too expensive!
2. B : It's not expensive.
3. A : Could you make it a little cheaper?
4. B : How about ten RMB?
5. A : Okay.

PINYIN

1. A : Ershí kuài qián? Tài guì le!
2. B : Bú guì.
3. A : Piányì yìdiǎnr ba.
4. B : Shí kuài zěnmeyàng?
5. A : Hǎo de.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 二十塊錢？太貴了！
2. B : 不貴。
3. A : 便宜一點兒吧。
4. B : 十塊怎麼樣？
5. A : 好的。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
了	了	le	change of state particle	particle
吧	吧	ba	(particle; denotes suggestion)	particle
怎么样	怎麼樣	zěnmeyàng	how about it	question word
钱	錢	qián	money	noun
便宜	便宜	piányì	inexpensive; cheap	adjective
二十	二十	èrshí	twenty (20)	numeral
太	太	tài	too	adverb
一点儿	一點兒	yīdiǎn er	a little	phrase
十	十	shí	ten (10)	numeral
不	不	bù	(negative prefix)	adverb
贵	貴	guì	expensive	adjective
块	塊	kuài	(measure word for money)	measure word

SAMPLE SENTENCES

他生病了。 *Tā shēngbìngle.* He got sick.	昨天下雨了。 *Zuótiān xiàyǔ le.* It rained yesterday.
好，我点吧。 *Hǎo, wǒ diǎn ba.* Okay, I'll order.	今天天气怎么样？ *Jīntiān tiānqì zěnmeyàng?* How is the weather today?
花钱 *huā qián* spend money	那个男人在付钱。 *Nàge nánrén zài fù qián.* The man is paying money.
美钞 *Měichāo* US paper money	付钱买东西 *fù qián mǎi dōngxi* pay money for goods
纸币 *zhǐbì* paper money	钱用来支付物品或服务。 *Qián yònglái zhīfù wùpǐn huò fúwù.* Money is used as payment for goods and services.

里面有钱的钱包 *lǐmian yǒu qián de qiánbāo* wallet with money inside	16块钱。 *Shíliù kuài qián.* Sixteen kuai.
便宜一点儿，可以吗？ *Piányi yīdiǎnr, kěyǐ ma?* Can you make it a little cheaper?	那个二十块钱。 *Nàge èrshí kuài qián.* That one is twenty kuai.
他这周末的家庭作业太多了。 *Tā zhè zhōumò de jiātíng zuòyè tài duō le.* He has too much homework for this weekend.	夏天太热了。 *Xiàtiān tài rè le.* The summer is too hot.
他只会说一点儿。 *Tā zhǐ huì shuō yīdiǎnr.* He can only speak a little.	十块钱。 *Shí kuài qián.* Ten kuai.
我不认识他。 *Wǒ bú rènshí tā.* I don't know him.	这个菜单上午餐很便宜，但是晚餐很贵。 *Zhège càidān shàng wǔcān hěn piányi, dànshì wǎncān hěn guì.* The lunch menu here is cheap, but dinner is very expensive.
贵的公寓 *guì de gōngyù* expensive apartment	一个房子很贵。 *Yí gè fángzi hěn guì.* A house is expensive.
贵的房子 *guì de fángzi* expensive house	东京的甜瓜很贵。 *Dōngjīng de tiánguā hěn guì.* Melons in Tokyo are very expensive.
这条裙子一百块钱。 *Zhè tiáo qúnzi yī bǎi kuài qián.* This skirt is a hundred kuai.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Adding Emphasis - 太。。。了 (*tài... le*)
太贵了！
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 yìdiǎnr
"a little cheaper"

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

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

Making a Suggestion - 吧 (*ba*)

便宜一点儿吧。
Piányi yìdiǎnr 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.

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. Haggling 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #23
Buying - Finding a Phone Card in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#23

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 我在哪儿可以买电话卡？
2. B : 在便利店。
3. A : 对不起，我听不懂。
4. B : 小商店。在那边。

ENGLISH

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

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi diànhuà kǎ?
2. B : Zài biànlì diàn.
3. A : Duìbùqǐ, wǒ tīng bù dǒng.
4. B : Xiǎo shāngdiàn. Zài nàbiān.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 我在哪兒可以買電話卡？
2. B : 在便利店。
3. A : 對不起，我聽不懂。
4. B : 小商店。在那邊。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
可以	可以	kěyǐ	can	verb
听不懂	聽不懂	tīng bù dǒng	to not understand	verb
买	買	mǎi	to buy	verb
电话卡	電話卡	diànhuàkǎ	telephone card	noun
便利店	便利店	biànlì diàn	convenience store	noun
商店	商店	shāngdiàn	shop; store	noun
那边	那邊	nàbiān	over there	adverb
小	小	xiǎo	little, small	adjective
对不起	對不起	duìbùqǐ	I'm sorry	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你可以叫我丽丽。 *Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lìli.* You can call me Lili.	我听不懂，请再说一遍，好吗？ *Wǒ tīng bù dǒng, qǐng zài shuō yī biàn, hǎo ma?* I cannot understand. Please say it again, OK?
你说的话我听不懂。 *Nǐ shuō de huà wǒ tīng bù dǒng.* I don't understand what you are saying.	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 diànhuàkǎ ma?* Do you have a telephone card?	去便利店买点牛奶。 *Qù biànlìdiàn mǎi diǎn niúnǎi.* Go to the convenience store, and buy some milk.
女人正在便利店买东西。 *Nǚrén zhèngzài biànlìdiàn mǎi dōngxi.* The woman is shopping at a convenience store.	24小时便利店 *èrshísì xiǎoshí biànlìdiàn* 24-hour convenience store
在便利店里买东西 *zài biànlìdiàn lǐ mǎi dōngxi* shop at a convenience store	这个便利店24小时营业。 *Zhège biànlìdiàn èrshísì xiǎoshí yíngyè.* The convenience store is open 24 hours.
去便利店买就好。 *Qù biànlìdiàn mǎi jiù hǎo.* Just go to a convenience store to buy it.	他家附近有一间大商店。 *Tā jiā fùjìn yǒu yī jiān dà shāngdiàn.* There is a large store near his home.

图书馆在那边。 *Túshūguǎn zài nàbiān.* The library is over there.	从这边到那边要多久？ *Cóng zhèbiān dào nàbiān yào duōjiǔ?* How long does it take to go from here to there?
这儿有一个小卖部。 *Zhèr yǒu yī ge xiǎomàibù.* There is a small shop here.	对不起，我很忙。 *Duìbuqǐ, wǒ hěn máng.* Sorry, I'm very busy.

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

电话卡 (*diànhuà kǎ*) can refer to any kind of phone card. If you want to be more specific, you can ask for an international long-distance calling card by using this term: 国际电话卡 (*guójì diànhuà kǎ*).

便利店 (*biànlì diàn*) refers to a convenience store. You will also sometimes hear a convenience store referred to as a 小卖部 (*xiǎomàibù*).

We use **听不懂 (*tīng bù dǒng*)** specifically when speaking of "not understanding" something you heard.

GRAMMAR

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 structure to find one:

1. 我在哪儿可以喝咖啡？
   Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ hē kāfēi?
   "Where can I have 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #24
Buying - By Train or by Plane in China?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#24

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

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

ENGLISH

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

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒ yào qù Běijīng. Wǒ yīnggāi zěnme qù?
2. B : Nǐ kěyǐ zuò huǒchē huòzhě zuò fēijī.
3. A : Wǒ zěnme mǎi huǒchē piào?
4. B : Nǐ kěyǐ zài huǒchē zhàn mǎi.

TRADITIONAL

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

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
可以	可以	kěyǐ	can	verb
北京	北京	Běijīng	Beijing	proper noun
票	票	piào	ticket	noun
火车	火車	huǒchē	train	noun
去	去	qù	to go	verb
怎么	怎麼	zěnme	how	adverb
要	要	yào	to be going to, have to	verb
火车站	火車站	huǒchēzhàn	train station	noun
坐	坐	zuò	to sit	verb
应该	應該	yīnggāi	should	verb
飞机	飛機	fēijī	airplane	noun
或者	或者	huòzhě	or	conjugation

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你可以叫我丽丽。 *Nǐ kěyǐ jiào wǒ Lìli.* You can call me Lili.	北京是中华人民共和国的首都，也称北平。 *Běijīng shì Zhōnghuá rénmín gònghéguó de shǒudū, yě chēng Běipíng.* Beijing, capital of the Peoples Republic of China is also called Peking.
我去北京大楼。 *Wǒ qù Běijīng Dàlóu.* I'm going to the Beijing building.	上火车前在车站买票。 *Shàng huǒchē qián zài chēzhàn mǎi piào.* Get your ticket at the station before getting on the train.
票务室 *piàowùshì* ticket office	预留车票 *yùliú chēpiào* reserved ticket
预留一张车票 *yùliú yì zhāng chēpiào* reserve a ticket	一张门票多少钱？ *Yī zhāng ménpiào duōshǎo qián?* How much is one ticket?
一张票多少钱？ *Yī zhāng piào duōshǎo qián?* How much is one ticket?	坐火车 *zuò huǒchē* ride a train

人们坐火车上下班。 *Rénmen zuò huǒchē shàng xiàbān.* The people are commuting to work by train.	下周末谁去海边？ *Xià zhōumò shéi qù hǎibiān?* Who is going to the beach next weekend?
我去了动物医院。 *Wǒ qù le dòngwù yīyuàn.* I went to the animal hospital.	我去公园。 *Wǒ qù gōngyuán.* I go to the park.
你们怎么说…… *Nǐmen zěnme shuō .....* how do you say…	你们怎么用这个？ *Nǐmen zěnme yòng zhège?* How do you use this?
告诉我怎么用遥控器。 *Gàosù wǒ zěnme yòng yáokòngqì.* Tell me how to use the remote control.	你的工作怎么样？ *Nǐ de gōngzuò zěnmeyàng?* How is your work?
他怎么受伤了？ *Tā zěnme shòushāng le?* How did he get injured?	中文怎么说? *Zhōngwén zěnme shuō?* How do you say it in Chinese?
明天我们要去杭州。 *Míngtiān wǒmen yào qù Hángzhōu.* Tomorrow we are going to Hangzhou.	在火车站 *zài huǒchēzhàn* at the train station
明天我们在火车站见。 *Míngtiān wǒmen zài huǒchēzhàn jiàn.* Tomorrow we will meet at the train station.	我们坐出租车吧。 *Wǒmen zuò chūzūchē ba.* Let's take a taxi.
我们明天应该休息。 *Wǒmen míngtiān yīnggāi xiūxi.* We should rest tomorrow.	喷气式飞机 *pēnqìshì fēijī* jet airplane
飞行中的飞机 *fēixíng zhōng de fēijī* flying airplane	飞行员 *fēixíngyuán* airplane pilot
私人飞机 *sīrén fēijī* private airplane	我们在飞机上坐了两个小时才起飞。 *Wǒmen zài fēi jīshàngzuòle liǎng ge xiǎoshí cái qǐfēi .* We sat on the airplane for two hours before it took off.

飞机在天上飞。 *Fēijī zài tiān shàng fēi.* The airplane is flying in the sky.	一百多年前莱特兄弟驾驶了第一架飞机。 *Yìbǎi duō nián qián Láitè xiōngdi jiàshǐle dì-yī jià fēijī.* The Wright Brothers flew the first airplane over 100 years ago.
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.	吃饭或者看电影都可以。 *Chīfàn huòzhě kàn diànyǐng dōu kěyǐ.* Eating or watching a movie, both are fine.

GRAMMAR

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 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #25
Buying - Getting a Train Ticket in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Vocabulary phrase usage
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#25

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

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

ENGLISH

1. A : I want one ticket to Beijing.
2. B : For today?
3. A : Yes.
4. 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?
5. A : The seven o'clock one.

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒ yào yì zhāng dào Běijīng de piào.
2. B : Jīntiān de ma?
3. A : Duì.
4. B : Nǐ yào shàngwǔ shíyī diǎn de, xiàwǔ sān diǎn de, háishì wǎnshàng qī diǎn de?
5. A : Qī diǎn de.

TRADITIONAL

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

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
还是	還是	háishì	or	conjunction
张	張	zhāng	measure word for flat objects	measure word
上午	上午	shàngwǔ	late morning	noun
要	要	yào	to want	verb
下午	下午	xiàwǔ	afternoon	time word, noun
到	到	dào	to	preposition
票	票	piào	ticket	noun
的	的	de	possessive particle	particle
北京	北京	Běijīng	Beijing	proper noun
今天	今天	jīntiān	today	noun
晚上	晚上	wǎnshàng	evening	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你是美国人还是加拿大人？ *Nǐ shì Měiguórén háishi Jiānádàrén?* Are you American or Canadian?	给我一张纸。 *Gěi wǒ yī zhāng zhǐ.* Give me a piece of paper.
上午我很忙。 *Shàngwǔ wǒ hěn máng.* I'm busy in the late morning.	上午天氣很好，下午可能下雨。 *Shàngwǔ tiānqì hěn hǎo, xiàwǔ kěnéng xiàyǔ.* In the morning, the weather will be good; in the afternoon, it might rain.

他要一张纸。 *Tā yào yī zhāng zhǐ.* He wants a piece of paper.	我会在今天下午给你回电话。 *Wǒ huì zài jīntiān xiàwǔ gěi nǐ huí diànhuà.* I'll call you back this afternoon.
我的猫喜欢在下午小憩一会儿。 *Wǒ de māo xǐhuān zài xiàwǔ xiǎoqì yīhuìr.* My cat likes to take a nap in the afternoon.	今天下午要下雪。 *Jīntiān xiàwǔ yào xiàxuě.* It's going to snow this afternoon.
各位乘客，下午好。 *Gè wèi chéngkè, xiàwǔ hǎo.* All passengers, good afternoon.	从上海到北京要飞两个小时。 *Cóng Shànghǎi dào Běijīng yào fēi liǎng ge xiǎoshí.* It takes two hours to fly from Shanghai to Beijing.
从早上六点到八点。 *Cóng zǎoshàng liù diǎn dào bā diǎn.* From 6:00 to 8:00 in the morning.	上火车前在车站买票。 *Shàng huǒchē qián zài chēzhàn mǎi piào.* Get your ticket at the station before getting on the train.
票务室 *piàowùshì* ticket office	预留车票 *yùliú chēpiào* reserved ticket
预留一张车票 *yùliú yì zhāng chēpiào* reserve a ticket	一张门票多少钱？ *Yī zhāng ménpiào duōshǎo qián?* How much is one ticket?
一张票多少钱？ *Yī zhāng piào duōshǎo qián?* How much is one ticket?	我喜欢我的工作。 *Wǒ xǐhuān wǒ de gōngzuò.* I like my job.
什么馅儿的？ *Shénme xiànr de?* What filling is it?	北京是中华人民共和国的首都，也称北平。 *Běijīng shì Zhōnghuá rénmín gònghéguó de shǒudū, yě chēng Běipíng.* Beijing, capital of the Peoples Republic of China is also called Peking.
我去北京大楼。 *Wǒ qù Běijīng Dàlóu.* I'm going to the Beijing building.	今天我有很多事情要做。 *Jīntiān wǒ yǒu hěn duō shìqíng yào zuò.* I have a lot to do today.
今天6：15 *jīntiān liù diǎn shíwǔ fēn* today at 6:15	今天的作业 *jīntiān de zuòyè* today's homework

她今天看起来很悲伤。 *Tā jīntiān kànqǐlái hěn bēishāng.* She looks really sad today.	今天特别热。 *Jīntiān tèbié rè.* It is especially hot today.
今天是星期四。 *Jīntiān shì xīngqīsì.* Today is Thursday.	晚饭后我们享受夜晚。 *Wǎnfàn hòu wǒmen xiǎngshòu yèwǎn.* After dinner we enjoy our evening.
傍晚日落 *bàngwǎn rìluò* evening sunset	城市的傍晚 *chéngshì de bàngwǎn* evening in the city
我们经常在夏日温暖的晚上打牌。 *Wǒmen jīngcháng zài xiàrì wēnnuǎn de wǎnshàng dǎpái.* We often play cards on a warm summer evening.	网球场晚上也开。 *Wǎngqiúchǎng wǎnshàng yě kāi.* The tennis court is open in the evening, too.
我们今天晚上去看电影。 *Wǒmen jīntiān wǎnshàng qù kān diànyǐng.* Tonight we are going to see a movie.	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

"Morning": There are two terms to say "it's morning." You can use either 上午 (*shàngwǔ*), as heard in this lesson's dialogue, or 早上 (*zǎoshàng*).

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is "To Want," "To Desire Something" - 要 (*yào*) + Noun
我要一张到北京的票。
Wǒ yào yì 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. 今天的吗？
   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 wǎnshàng 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 wǎnshàng 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
   wǎnshàng jiǔ diǎn
   "nine o'clock in the evening"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Planes and Trains in China

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.

There are a few interesting consequences of this arrangement that 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.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #1
Top of the Morning to Ya!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

1

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 早啊。
2. B : 早，你去哪儿啊？
3. A : 我去上班。拜拜。
4. B : 再见。

ENGLISH

1. A : Morning.
2. B : Good morning, where are you going?
3. A : I'm going to work. Bye-bye.
4. B : Bye.

PINYIN

1. A : Zǎo a.
2. B : Zǎo, nǐ qù nǎr a?
3. A : Wǒ qù shàngbān. Báibái.
4. B : Zàijiàn.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 早啊。
2. B : 早，你去哪兒啊？
3. A : 我去上班。拜拜。
4. B : 再見。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
早上	早上	zǎoshàng	early morning	noun
上午	上午	shàngwǔ	late morning	noun
中午	中午	zhōngwǔ	noon	noun
下午	下午	xiàwǔ	afternoon	noun
晚上	晚上	wǎnshàng	evening	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

早上好。 *Zǎoshàng hǎo.* Good morning!	上午我很忙。 *Shàngwǔ wǒ hěn máng.* I'm busy in the late morning.
上午天氣很好，下午可能下雨。 *Shàngwǔ tiānqì hěn hǎo, xiàwǔ kěnéng xiàyǔ.* In the morning, the weather will be good; in the afternoon, it might rain.	你中午吃什么？ *Nǐ zhōngwǔ chī shénme?* What are you eating at noon?
下午我不忙。 *Xiàwǔ wǒ bù máng.* I'm not busy in the late afternoon.	晚上好。 *Wǎnshàng hǎo.* Good evening.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 啊, *a* (Modal Particle)
早，你去哪儿啊？
Zǎo, nǐ qù nǎr a?
"Good morning, where are you going?"

啊 (*A*) is a modal particle that we use to soften the message of a sentence. When used at the end of questions and commands, it causes the utterance to sound less intrusive and forceful. 啊 is quite common in spoken Chinese. Using 啊 in your daily speech will signify you as sounding like a native speaker.

For Example:

1. 你好啊。
Nǐhǎo ā.
"Hello."

2. 晚上好啊。
Wǎnshàng hǎo a.
"Good evening!"

3. 你去哪儿啊？
Nǐ qù nǎr ā?
"Where are you going?"

4. 有什么事儿啊？
Yǒu shénme shìr ā?
"What's up?"

5. 对啊。
Duì a.
"Right!"

6. 好啊。
Hǎo a.
"Great!"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Early Bird Gets a Nap

Many Chinese are early risers, ready to take on the day head on. The large population of senior citizens in China can be found buying their daily produce early in the morning. Constant construction combined with honking cars ensures that sleeping in is not an option. Another reason that getting up early is a way of life in China is that there are no time zones or daylight savings time. That means that both Tibet and Shanghai share the same time year round. What this means to east coasters is that the sun rises ridiculously early—close to five o'clock AM in the summer months.

So knowing your morning salutations is vital as you wipe the sleep away from your eyes and groggily greet the guard standing post at your apartment entrance gate. But there is a bright side. Waking early means that there is time to take afternoon naps. Naps are actually an institution in China. Many schools and offices will give a longer lunch break to accommodate the Chinese version of a *siesta.*

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #2
Not too Shabby

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#2

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 好久不见。
2. B : 是啊，你好吗？
3. A : 挺好的，你呢？
4. B : 还不错。

ENGLISH

1. A : Long time no see.
2. B : I know, how are you?
3. A : Pretty good. And you?
4. B : Not bad.

PINYIN

1. A : Hǎojiǔbújiàn.
2. B : Shì a, nǐhǎo ma？
3. A : Tǐng hǎo de, nǐ ne?
4. B : Hái búcuò.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 好久不見。
2. B : 是啊，你好嗎？
3. A : 挺好的，你呢？
4. B : 還不錯。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
我很好	我很好	wǒ hěn hǎo	I'm good	phrase
还不错	還不錯	hái búcuò	Not too bad	phrase
挺好的	挺好的	tǐng hǎo de	pretty good	phrase
还行	還行	háixíng	Just okay	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我很好，谢谢。 *Wǒ hěn hǎo, xièxie.* I'm good, thank you.	还不错，你呢？ *Hái bùcuò, nǐ ne?* Not too bad, what about you?
挺好的，你怎么样？ *Tǐng hǎo de, nǐ zěnmeyàng?* Pretty good, how are you doing?	还行，谢谢。 *Hái xíng, xièxie.* Just okay, thanks.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 不错, *búcuò* ("Not Bad/Good")
还不错。
Hái búcuò.
"Not bad."

不错 (*búcuò*) is an adjective that means "not bad" or "good." 不 means "not," and 错 means "wrong." When we put these two characters together, it means "not wrong" or "correct." Yes, one of the meanings of this word is "not wrong." For instance, 他的话不错. (*Tā dehuà búcuò*). Here it means "What he said is not wrong." We often use 不错 by itself, and you can use it to give your impression of an event or action. One thing to notice is that since both characters are fourth tones, 不 changes into a second tone.

For Example:

1. 还不错。
   Hái búcuò.
   "Not too bad."
2. 这个不错。
   Zhège búcuò.
   "This one isn't bad."
3. 他很不错。
   Tā hěn búcuò.
   "He's pretty good."

4. 那个女孩挺不错的。
   Nà gè nǚhái tǐng búcuò de.
   "That girl is not bad.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Common Smalltalk

Communities and living spaces in China can be very tight, resulting in a close relationship between you and your neighbors. To pass the time and to make things less awkward, small talk is commonplace. Usually the weather, pets, and children are obvious topics. There is a name in China that applies to elderly men and women who are retired and go door to door in their neighborhood to chat with other retirees. This group is called 串门 (*chuàn mén*). This literally translates to "visit many doors."

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #3
Your Dog Looks Kinda Sick

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#3

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你的狗病了。
2. B : 不可能。
3. A : 真的，去医院吧。
4. B : 胡说。

ENGLISH

1. A : Your dog is sick.
2. B : Impossible.
3. A : Really. We should go to the hospital.
4. B : Nonsense.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ de gǒu bìng le.
2. B : Bù kěnéng.
3. A : Zhēnde, qù yīyuàn ba.
4. B : Húshuō.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你的狗病了。
2. B : 不可能。
3. A : 真的，去醫院吧。
4. B : 胡說。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
老	老	lǎo	old	adjective
脏	髒	zāng	dirty	adjective
病	病	bìng	sick	adjective
不可能	不可能	bù kěnéng	impossible	
掉毛	掉毛	diàomáo	to shed	verb
吵	吵	chǎo	noisy	adjective
胡说	胡說	húshuō	talking nonsense	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我的狗很老。 *Wǒ de gǒu hěn lǎo.* My dog is really old.	这个城市的街道很脏。 *Zhège chéngshì de jiēdào hěn zāng.* The city streets are very dirty.
脏衣服 *zāng yīfu* dirty clothes	衣服脏了。 *Yīfu zāng le.* The clothes are dirty.
我昨天病了。 *Wǒ zuótiān bìng le.* I was sick yesterday.	不可能！ *Bù kě néng!* It is not possible!
他这个人，我们不可能从他那儿得到一星半点的消息。 *Tā zhège rén, wǒmen bù kěnéng cóng tā nàr dédào yīxīng bàndiǎn de xiāoxī.* We can't get any information out of this guy.	你的狗掉毛吗？ *Nǐ de gǒu diào máo ma?* Does your dog shed?
别吵！ *Bié chǎo!* Don't be noisy!	不要胡说！ *Bùyào húshuō!* Stop talking nonsense!

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 不可能, *bù kěnéng* ("Impossible")
不可能。
Bù kěnéng.
"Impossible."

不可能 (*bù kěnéng*) is a phrase, which means "impossible." We use it every day in spoken Chinese. The breakdown of 不可能 is: 不 is "not," 可 means "to allow, to be okay," and 能 is "not to be able to do something." 不可能 literally means "to be able to do something." This also functions as "impossible." We can use it as a whole sentence or we can put the phrase into a longer sentence.

For Example:

1. 不可能。
   Bù kěnéng.
   "It's impossible."
2. 他不可能去。
   Tā bù kěnéng qù.
   "He is not possible to go there."
3. 我不可能同意。
   Wǒ bù kěnéng tóngyì.
   "I will never agree."

Formula: subject + 不可能 + verb

For Example:

1. 他不可能来。
   Tā bù kěnéng lái.
   "It's impossible for him to come."
2. 你不可能被开除。
   Nǐ bù kěnéng bèi kāichú.
   "Expulsion is impossible."
3. 她不可能辞职。
   Tā bù kěnéng cízhí.
   "It's impossible for her to resign."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Vaccines for Pets

Taking your pet to the veterinarian's office can be quite simple. Pets in cities are required to have vaccinations. The vaccinations can cost between forty and sixty RMB per shot. To spay or neuter animals, it depends on how you acquired the animal. If you adopted a stray animal off the street, the procedure will be cheaper, somewhere around two hundred and fifty RMB. If the cat is a family pet, the cost will be around three hundred RMB. However, if you found the animal on the street and plan to release it back into the wild, the procedure will be even less.

Correction
In the lesson's main audio at min [1:12] to [1:14] and [1:45] to [1:50] the instructor says [好像是关于特殊儿童教育的。], but should have said [好像是关于二十一世纪互联网发展的。]

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #4
Why Are You Crying?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#4

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你怎么了？
2. B : 我不好。
3. A : 你为什么哭了？
4. B : 我的狗病了。

ENGLISH

1. A : What's wrong?
2. B : I'm not doing too good.
3. A : Why are you crying?
4. B : My dog is sick.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ zěnme le?
2. B : Wǒ bù hǎo.
3. A : Nǐ wèishénme kū le?
4. B : Wǒ de gǒu bìng le.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你怎麼了？
2. B : 我不好。
3. A : 你為甚麼哭了？
4. B : 我的狗病了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
哭	哭	kū	to cry	verb
笑	笑	xiào	to laugh	verb
生气	生氣	shēngqì	to be angry	verb
高兴	高興	gāoxìng	happy	adjective
伤心	傷心	shāngxīn	to be hurt	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你哭了吗？ *Nǐ kū le ma?* Are you crying?	没事的，别哭了。 *Méishì de, bié kū le.* It's ok, stop crying.
别哭了。 *Bié kū le.* Don't cry.	微笑。大笑。傻笑。嘲笑。冷笑。 *"wēixiào .dàxiào .shǎxiào .cháoxiào .lěngxiào ."* Smile.Laugh.Titter.Jeer at.Sneer.
他很高兴，笑了。 *Tā hěn gāoxìng, xiào le.* He was very happy and laughed.	我很生气。 *Wǒ hěn shēngqì.* I'm very angry.
你不高兴吗？ *Nǐ bù gāoxìng ma?* You're not happy?	别伤心了。 *Bié shāngxīn le.* Don't feel hurt.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 为什么, *wèishénme* ("Why")
你为什么哭了？
Nǐ wèishénme kū le?
"Why are you crying?"

为什么 (*Wèi shén me*) is a pronoun we use to ask a "why" question. Its position in the sentence is flexible: it can occur either before or after the subject.

For Example:

1. 你为什么哭了？
   "Why are you crying?"

2. 你为什么不去？
   "Why aren't you going?"
3. 这是为什么？
   "Why is that?"
4. 你为什么迟到？
   "Why are you late?"
5. 他为什么不同意？
   "Why doesn't he agree?"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Pressure of China

Life has many pressures. This is very true for life in China. Demands from family, work, and society can all come bearing down at once. Pressures to find a suitable job, marry a suitable spouse, and be successful in life are just a few of the pressures ordinary Chinese people face. In addition to all these things, materialism from commercials and ads lowers people's self-esteem. For the people who are lucky enough to save enough money for a mortgage, rising housing prices have created a phenomenon. The group of people who cannot afford anything in life but to pay off their mortgages are known as 房奴 (*fángnú).*

To escape the pressures of daily life, many people retreat to the Internet where they can engage in a digital fantasy world. As a result, 网瘾, *wǎngyǐn* ("Internet addiction") has become another problem among Chinese youth. Government attempts to crack down on this problem have led to draconian measures including the shutting down of illegal Internet cafes and barring anyone under eighteen years old from using Internet cafes.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #5
Too Tired for Fun in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#5

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你忙吗？
2. B : 不忙，怎么了？
3. A : 我们出去玩儿吧。
4. B : 对不起，我累了。

ENGLISH

1. A : Are you busy?
2. B : No, what's up?
3. A : Let's go out for some fun.
4. B : I'm sorry, I'm tired.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ máng ma?
2. B : Bùmáng, zěnme le?
3. A : Wǒmen chūqù wánr ba.
4. B : Duìbùqǐ, wǒ lèi le.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你忙嗎？
2. B : 不忙，怎麼了？
3. A : 我們出去玩兒吧。
4. B : 對不起，我累了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
看电影	看電影	kàn diànyǐng	to watch a movie	phrase
玩儿	玩兒	wánr	to play	verb
累	累	lèi	tired	adjective
喝咖啡	喝咖啡	hē kāfēi	to drink coffee	phrase
出去	出去	chūqu	to go out	verb
买东西	買東西	mǎi dōngxi	to buy things	phrase
忙	忙	máng	busy	adjective
旅游	旅遊	lǚyóu	to travel	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

一起看电影怎么样？

Yīqǐ kàn diànyǐng zěnmeyàng?

What do you think about us watching a movie together?

我不累，谢谢。

Wǒ bù lèi, xièxie.

I'm not tired, thanks.

我不喜欢喝咖啡。

Wǒ bù xǐhuān hē kāfēi.

I don't like to drink coffee.

你今晚想出去吗？

Nǐ jīnwǎn xiǎng chūqu ma?

Do you feel like going out tonight?

我去超市买东西。

Wǒ qù chāoshì mǎi dōngxi.

I'm going to the supermarket to buy things.

今天我很忙。

Jīntiān wǒ hěn máng.

Today, I'm busy.

你周六忙吗？

Nǐ zhōuliù máng ma?

Are you busy on Saturday?

我喜欢旅游。

Wǒ xǐhuān lǚyóu.

I like traveling.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 出去／进来, *chūqù jìnlái* ("to go out/ to come in")
我们出去玩儿吧
Wǒmen chūqù wánr ba.
"Let's go out for some fun."

出去 (*chūqù*) and 进来 (*jìnlái*) are both verbs that indicate a move either from inside to out or from outside to in. 出去 means "to leave the speaker and go out," 出 is "to exit," and 去 is "to go." 出去 means "to go outside." When you use 出去, the speaker must be inside.

For Example:

1. 你出去。
   Nǐ chūqù.
   "You go out." (I am inside.)
2. 我想出去。
   Wǒ xiǎng chūqù.
   "I want to go out." (Now I am inside.)

进来 means "to come in": the speaker is also inside. 进 is "to come in" or "to go in," and 来 is "to come." 进来 is "to come in."

For Example:

1. 请进来。
   Qǐng jìnlái.
   "Please come in."
2. 别进来！
   Bié jìnlái!
   "Don't come in."
3. 我刚刚进来。
   Wǒ gānggāng jìnlái
   "I just came in."

Sample Sentences

1. 我们出去玩儿吧？
   Wǒmen chūqù wánr ba?
   "How about let's go out for some fun."
2. 你出去！
   Nǐ chūqù!
   "Get out!"
3. 我出去吃饭了。
   Wǒ chūqù chīfàn le.
   "I went out to eat."
4. 你进来看看。
   Nǐ jìnlái kànkan.
   "Come in and take a look."
5. 别进来。
   Bié jìnlái.

"Don't come in."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Generation Differences

The one difference between the people born after 1980, known as the 八零后, and the older generation, is how they spend their leisure time. The 80s generation is known for being more adventurous both in how they travel and spend their money. In nightclubs throughout China, you can find packed bars with white-collar workers, and other types gleefully spending their paychecks. Besides partying, shopping is also high on the list of ways to kill a Saturday. People are bombarded by ads everywhere they go, including the Internet, so the subconscious reflex to shop is growing. But for some people, the demands of a stressful and laborious job overpower the urge to have fun.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #6
This Chinese Bathroom is Occupied

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#6

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 洗手间有人吗？
2. B : 有人，稍等！
3. A : 你快点儿！
4. B : 稍等！

ENGLISH

1. A : Is there anyone in the bathroom?
2. B : There's someone in here, wait a moment.
3. A : Hurry up.
4. B : Wait a moment.

PINYIN

1. A : Xǐshǒujiān yǒu rén ma?
2. B : Yǒu rén, shāoděng!
3. A : Nǐ kuài diǎnr!
4. B : Shāoděng!

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 洗手間有人嗎？
2. B : 有人，稍等！
3. A : 你快點兒！
4. B : 稍等！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
厕所	廁所	cèsuǒ	bathroom	noun
洗手间	洗手間	xǐshǒujiān	washroom	noun
马桶	馬桶	mǎtǒng	toilet	noun
上	上	shàng	to get on; on; top, To go up	noun/verb
手纸	手紙	shǒuzhǐ	toilet paper	noun
水龙头	水龍頭	shuǐlóngtóu	water tap	noun
稍等	稍等	shāoděng	to wait a moment	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我想上厕所。 *Wǒ xiǎng shàng cèsuǒ.* I have to go to the bathroom.	洗手间在哪儿？ *Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?* Where is the washroom?
马桶坏了。 *Mǎtǒng huài le.* The toilet is broken.	上楼梯。 *Shàng lóutī.* Go upstairs.
两只螃蟹在岩石上走。 *Liǎng zhī pángxiè zài yánshí shàng zǒu.* There are two crabs walking on a rock.	没有手纸了。 *Méiyǒu shǒuzhǐ le.* There's no more toilet paper.
我买了两卷手纸。 *Wǒ mǎi le liǎng juǎn shǒuzhǐ.* I bought two rolls of toilet paper.	打开水龙头。 *Dǎkāi shuǐlóngtóu.* Turn on the tap.
麻烦您稍等，经理马上就开完会了。 *Máfan nín shāoděng, jīnglǐ mǎshàng jiù kāi wán huì le.* Please wait a moment, the manager will be done with his meeting very soon.	请稍等。 *Qǐng shāoděng.* Please wait a moment.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 有, *yǒu* ("existence")
洗手间有人吗？
Xǐshǒujiān yǒu rén ma?
"Is there anyone in the bathroom?"

有 is a verb, which means "to have" or "to exist." You can use it to both represent real or abstract ideas or things. For example, 这儿有问题。*Zhèr yǒu wèntí.* ("There is some problem here.") The problem is not a tangible thing but represents an idea or thought. Another example is 房间里有人。*Fángjiān lǐyǒu rén.* ("There's somebody in the room.") Here, there is a real existing object, in this case, a person. 饭馆儿里有座位。*Fàn guǎnr lǐ yǒu zuòwèi.* ("There are some seats in the restaurant.") Here, you can see, when the subject of the sentence is a place or time, and we can translate the sentence as "there is..." or "There are...."

For Example:

1. 洗手间有人。
Xǐshǒujiānyǒu rén.
"There is someone in the bathroom."

2. 厨房没有灯。
Chúfáng méiyǒu dēng.
"There are no lights in the kitchen."

3. 今天晚上有派对。
Jīntiān wǎnshàng yǒu pàiduì.
"There's a party tonight."

4. 那儿有座位。
Nàr yǒu zuòwèi.
"There's a seat there."

5. 这儿有人吗？
Zhèr yǒu rén ma?
"Is there any here?

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Not So Private Bathrooms

Bathrooms in China can be either an enlightening experience or a complete nightmare, depending on whom you ask. In China's quest for modernity, the upgrade from a mainly squatting toilet culture, to a western toilet bowl-based culture is slowly taking shape. In many of the high rise apartment buildings built within the last ten years, a western seating toilet is the norm. However, in rural China and public places such as train stations, the squatting toilet still is the norm. The lack of privacy in China's toilets can be very unsettling to tourists and recently-arrived foreign expats. In public bathrooms in Beijing, there exist no individual stalls, but an open room with urinals lining the floor. Just remember to bring some toilet paper with you regardless of where you travel.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #7
Two Hungry Stomachs in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
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7

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 我们吃饭吧。
2. B : 你饿了吗？
3. A : 嗯。
4. B : 我也饿了。
5. A : 我们出去吃吧。

ENGLISH

1. A : Let's eat.
2. B : Are you hungry?
3. A : Mmm.
4. B : I'm hungry too.
5. A : Let's go out and eat.

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒmen chīfàn ba.
2. B : Nǐ è le ma?
3. A : En.
4. B : Wǒ yě è le.
5. A : Wǒmen chūqù chī ba.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 我們吃飯吧。
2. B : 你餓了嗎？
3. A : 嗯。
4. B : 我也餓了。
5. A : 我們出去吃吧。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
饿	餓	è	hungry	adjective
困	困	kùn	sleepy	adjective
累	累	lèi	tired	adjective
饱	飽	bǎo	full	adjective
忙	忙	máng	busy	adjective
烦	煩	fán	annoyed	adjective
行	行	xíng	terrific, good	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我饿了。 *Wǒ è le.* I'm hungry.	在午休时间发困 *zài wǔxiū shíjiān fā kùn* sleepy at nap time
这个男人很困。 *Zhège nánrén hěn kùn.* The man is sleepy.	你困吗？ *Nǐ kùn ma?* Are you sleepy?
他很累。 *Tā hěn lèi.* He's very tired.	我很饱。 *Wǒ hěn bǎo.* I'm very full.
大家都挺忙的。 *Dàjiā dōu tǐng máng de.* Everyone is all quite busy.	他有点儿烦。 *Tā yǒudiǎnr fán.* He's a little annoyed.
这个人真行。 *Zhège rén zhēn xíng.* This person is really terrific.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 也, *yě* ("also")
我也饿了。
Wǒ yě è le.
"I'm hungry too."

也 (*yě*) is an adverb that corresponds to the English words "also" and "too." It follows the subject and comes before the verb of the sentence. In Chinese we also find it before adjectives, which are sometimes known as stative verbs. The meaning of "also" and "too" applies to the subject and not to the verb phrase that follows. For example, we can translate 我也饿了。 *Wǒ yě è le.* ("I (in addition to other people) also am hungry.")

The formula for using 也 in a positive sentence is: (subject) + 也 + (verb/adjective)
The formula for using 也 in a negative sentence is: (subject) + 也 + 不 + (verb/adjective)

For Example:

1. 你不去我也不去。
   Nǐ bú qù wǒ yě bú qù.
   "If you're not going, then I'm not going either."
2. 我也很生气。
   Wǒ yě hěn shēngqì.
   "I'm also really angry."
3. 我也迟到了。
   Wǒ yě chídào le.
   "I'm also late."
4. 我也没吃饭。
   Wǒ yě méi chīfàn.
   "I also haven't eaten."

You can also use 也 to chain together more complex ideas or join together otherwise independent sentences. This can also be used to imply a conditional relationship between the two separate clauses:

1. 你不去，我也不去。
   Nǐ bú qù, wǒ yě bú qù.
   "If you don't go, I won't go either."
2. 我很困，她也很困。
   Wǒ hěn kùn, tā yě hěn kùn.
   "I'm really sleepy, she's really sleepy too."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Table for One?

Going out to eat can oftentimes be less expensive than cooking a meal yourself. A full meal for one at a 成都小吃 ("Sichuan diner") can run anywhere from eight to fifteen RMB. This is the equivalent to two and a half USD. On the other hand, buying all the necessary ingredients to make a meal yourself can run anywhere from twenty to forty RMB. But the most effective way to eat is with a group. Chinese portions are served not with an individual in mind, but rather a large party. The dishes will be brought out one at a time. Many restaurants will also have a "lazy Susan" that easily accommodates a large amount of people eating at one table and makes it easy for diners to pick and choose between the many dishes ordered.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #8
Excuses for Being Late in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
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- Cultural insight

#8

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你迟到了！
2. B : 我没有， 还早呢。
3. A : 现在几点？
4. B : 哦……迟到了。

ENGLISH

1. A : You're late.
2. B : No, I'm not. It's still early.
3. A : What time is it right now?
4. B : Oh. I'm late.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ chídào le!
2. B : Wǒ méiyǒu, hái zǎo ne.
3. A : Xiànzài jǐdiǎn?
4. B : O .....chídào le.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你遲到了！
2. B : 我沒有， 還早呢。
3. A : 現在幾點？
4. B : 哦.....遲到了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
迟到	遲到	chídào	to be late	verb
还	還	hái	still	adverb
早	早	zǎo	early	adjective
现在	現在	xiànzài	right now	noun
几点	幾點	jǐdiǎn	what time	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我今天迟到了。 *Wǒ jīntiān chídào le.* I was late today.	他的车坏了，现在还在修。 *Tā de chē huài le, xiànzài hái zài xiū.* His car is broken and is still being repaired.
你还在中国吗？ *Nǐ hái zài Zhōngguó ma?* You are still in China?	我还没吃饭。 *Wǒ hái méi chīfàn.* I still haven't eaten.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 还 (*hái*) "still"
我没有， 还早呢。
Wǒ méiyǒu, hái zǎo ne.
"No I'm not, it's still early."

In its simplest form, the adverb 还 (*hái*) functions as "still" or "as before." We place it in front of verbs or adjectives. To negate 还, you can attach 不 or 没 depending on the tense after the conjunction. For example, 我还有个约会。(*Wǒ hái yǒu gè yuēhuì.)* "I still have one appointment." To negate that sentence, it would be 我还没有约会。 (*Wǒ hái méiyǒu yuēhuì.)* "I still don't have an appointment."

Examples:

1. 还早呢！
Hái zǎo ne!
"It's still early!"

2. 别着急，还有时间。
Bié zháojí, hái yǒu shíjiān.
"Don't be anxious; there's still time."

3. 我还要上课。
Wǒ hái yào shàngkè.
"I still have to go to class."

4. 你还有事儿吗？
Nǐ hái yǒushìr ma?
"Do you still have any problem?"

5. 我还在北京。
Wǒ hái zài Běijīng.
"I'm still in Beijing."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Poor Punctuality

Punctuality is not one of China's strong points. Unlike the West, China did not evolve their business culture from the nine to five model but rather something similar to a piecemeal basis. Depending on the person, being on time can be a personal trait. However, in the larger scheme of Chinese business culture, being on time is not part of the ethos. This mentality is changing as multi-national corporations set the tone for how a twenty-first century business should be run. Standard operating hours are becoming more and more common for franchised businesses both Chinese and foreign owned.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #9
The Unhelpful Chinese Operator

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
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- Cultural insight

#9

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你好，是小王吗？
2. B : 不是。
3. A : 请问，小王在吗？
4. B : 不在。
5. A : 他去哪儿了？
6. B : 不知道。

ENGLISH

1. A : Hi, is this Xiao Wang?
2. B : No.
3. A : Excuse me, is Xiao Wang there?
4. B : No.
5. A : Where is he?
6. B : I don't know.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐhǎo, shì Xiǎo Wáng ma?
2. B : Bú shì.
3. A : Qǐngwèn, Xiǎo Wáng zài ma?
4. B : Bú zài.
5. A : Tā qù nǎr le?
6. B : Bù zhīdào.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你好，是小王嗎？
2. B : 不是。
3. A : 請問，小王在嗎？
4. B : 不在。
5. A : 他去哪兒了？
6. B : 不知道。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
转	轉	zhuǎn	to turn	verb
打	打	dǎ	to flag down	verb
请问	請問	qǐngwèn	excuse me	phrase
留言	留言	liúyán	to leave a message	verb
喂	喂	wéi	hello	onomatopoeia
在	在	zài	to be at	verb
电话	電話	diànhuà	telephone	noun
号码	號碼	hàomǎ	number	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

请转一下儿，谢谢。 *Qǐng zhuǎn yīxiàr, xièxie.* Can you transfer me? Thank you.	我打不到出租车。 *Wǒ dǎ bù dào chūzūchē.* I can't flag down a cab.
请问您是？ *Qǐng wèn nín shì?* Excuse me, you are?	您需要留言吗？ *Nín xūyào liúyán ma?* Do you want to leave a message?
喂，你好。 *Wéi, nǐhǎo.* Wei, hello.	

在，你稍等。 *Zài, nǐ shāoděng.* He's here, please wait.	男人正在用座机打电话。 *Nánrén zhèngzài yòng zuòjī dǎ diànhuà.* The person is making a telephone call.
电话和传真 *diànhuà hé chuánzhēn* telephone and fax	蓝色的电话在桌子上。 *Lánsè de diànhuà zài zhuōzi shàng.* The blue telephone is on the table.
网络电话 *wǎngluò diànhuà* Voice over Internet Protocol telephone	无线电话 *wúxiàn diànhuà* cordless telephone
他在打电话。 *Tā zài dǎ diànhuà.* He is making a phone call.	你的电话号码是多少？ *Nǐ de diànhuà hàomǎ shì duōshǎo?* What is your phone number?

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 不, *bù* ("Not")
不知道。
Bù zhīdào.
"I don't know."

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

You can use 不 in three different instances.

1. *bù* + (verb phrase)
2. *bù* + (adjective)
3. *bù* + (adverb)

For Example:

1. 这儿的服务员的态度不好。
   Zhèr de fúwùyuán de tàidù bù hǎo.
   "The waitresses here have bad attitudes."
2. 他们不去看电影。
   Tā men bú qù kàn diànyǐng.
   "They aren't going to see a movie."
3. 王丽不会游泳。
   Wáng lì bú huì yóuyǒng.

"Wang Li can't swim."

4. 他不在家。
   Tā bú zài jiā.
   "He's not home."

5. 我不高兴。
   Wǒ bù gāoxìng.
   "I'm not happy."

6. 我不明白。
   Wǒ bù míngbai.
   "I don't understand."

7. 这个不好。
   Zhègè bù hǎo.
   "This one isn't good."

8. 我不出去。
   Wǒ bù chūqù.
   "I'm not going out."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Telephone Rates

Making calls to someone in the same city as you costs much less compared to inner-city, and inner-province calling. Once you are in a different city or province, the best way to communicate with your friends or family is through the Internet. The second best choice is short messages. In China, all the telecommunication companies will charge extra fees if you are not in the city where you bought your SIM card. The worst case is when you work in a big city like Beijing and your hometown is in another province. Every time you call home, the telephone companies will charge you at least three times more money than they usually do. So remember, never call anybody by cell phone if you leave the city where you buy your SIM card.

However, if you call somebody using an IC card, the cost is about fifty percent cheaper. If you want to call somebody in another country, the Hello card is the best choice, or you can just use Skype.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #10
What's the Rush in China?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#10

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你慢点儿。
2. B : 你快点儿。
3. A : 你走路太快。
4. B : 你太慢。
5. A : 我累死了！

ENGLISH

1. A : Slow down.
2. B : Go a bit faster.
3. A : You're walking too fast.
4. B : You're too slow.
5. A : I'm exhausted.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ màn diǎnr.
2. B : Nǐ kuài diǎnr.
3. A : Nǐ zǒulù tài kuài.
4. B : Nǐ tài màn.
5. A : Wǒ lèi sǐ le!

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你慢點兒。
2. B : 你快點兒。
3. A : 你走路太快。
4. B : 你太慢。
5. A : 我累死了！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
快点儿	快點兒	kuài diǎnr	hurry up	phrase
慢点儿	慢點兒	màn diǎnr	slow down	phrase
早点儿	早點兒	zǎo diǎnr	a little earlier	phrase
晚点儿	晚點兒	wǎn diǎnr	a little later	phrase
大声点儿	大聲點兒	dàshēng diǎnr	a little louder	phrase
小声点儿	小聲點兒	xiǎoshēng diǎnr	a little softer	phrase
死	死	sǐ	to die	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

快点儿，好吗？ *Kuài diǎnr, hǎo ma?* Hurry, all right?	你慢点儿。 *Nǐ màn diǎnr.* Slow down.
早点儿回家吧。 *Zǎo diǎnr huíjiā ba.* Come home earlier.	我晚点儿走。 *Wǒ wǎn diǎnr zǒu.* I'll leave later.
请大声点儿。 *Qǐng dàshēng diǎnr.* Please speak a bit louder	请小声点儿。 *Qǐng xiǎoshēng diǎnr.* Please speak a bit softer.
我已经累死了。 *Wǒ yǐjīng lèi sǐ le.* I'm already really tired.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 死了, *sǐ le* (Adverb of Degree - "to death")
我累死了！
Wǒ lèi sǐ le!
"I'm exhausted!"

死 is a verb that means "to die." When followed by 了 and preceded by an adjective, the connotation changes from literal to metaphorical. The particle 了 indicates something will happen in a short time. Here we put 死 and 了 together after a verb or adjective. The meaning then changes to "going to die because of verb/ adjective." For instance: 我饿死了。 *Wǒ è sǐ le.* ("I'm starving"). Another common expression using "...to the death" is 我气死了。 *Wǒ qì sǐ le.* ("I'm infuriated.")

For Example:

1. 我们吃饭吧，我饿死了。
   Wǒmen chīfàn ba, wǒ è sǐ le.
   "Let's go eat some food. I'm starving to death."
2. 气死我了！
   Qì sǐ wǒ le.
   "I'm infuriated!"
3. 今天忙死我了。
   Jīntiān máng sǐ wǒ le.
   "I'm extremely busy today."
4. 累死我了，我要休息！
   Lèi sǐ wǒ le, wǒ yào xiūxi!
   "I'm exhausted; I need to rest."
5. 你怎么才来？急死我了。
   Nǐ zěnme cái lái? Jí sǐ wǒ le.
   "How are you only arriving now? I was worried to death."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Personal Shopper

Don't be surprised to see an exasperated man on a shopping trip at the end of his wits. He will be carrying a large assortment of shopping bags and, more often than not, there will be a girl in front with nothing in hand, walking excitedly. Yes, guys hate shopping. At least Chinese guys hate shopping, because their job at that time is not to choose anything they need, but to help their girlfriends carry all their new purchases. At the same time, they must pretend to be very, very happy to do all of this, because their girlfriends will not be pleased and will probably quarrel with them otherwise.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #11
The Brand New Chinese Bike

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
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- Cultural insight

#11

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你看，我的新自行车。
2. B : 很漂亮！
3. A : 也很便宜，100块钱。

ENGLISH

1. A : Hey look, my new bicycle.
2. B : It's really pretty.
3. A : And it was also very cheap. One hundred kuai.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ kàn, wǒ de xīn zìxíngchē.
2. B : Hěn piàoliàng!
3. A : Yě hěn piányì, yìbǎi kuài.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你看，我的新自行車。
2. B : 很漂亮！
3. A : 也很便宜，100塊錢。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
便宜	便宜	piányì	inexpensive; cheap	adjective
自行车	自行車	zìxíngchē	bicycle	noun
摩托车	摩托車	mótuōchē	motorcycle	noun
火车	火車	huǒchē	train	noun
出租车	出租車	chūzū chē	taxi	noun
滑板	滑板	huábǎn	skateboard	noun
漂亮	漂亮	piàoliàng	pretty	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

便宜一点儿，可以吗？ *Piányi yīdiǎnr, kěyǐ ma?* Can you make it a little cheaper?	我可以借你的自行车吗？ *Wǒ kěyǐ jiè nǐ de zìxíngchē ma?* Can I borrow your bicycle?
他不会骑摩托车，撞到了树上。 *Tā bù huì qí mótuōchē, zhuàngdào le shù shàng.* He couldn't drive a motorbike and hit a tree.	火车就要出站了。 *Huǒchē jiù yào chūzhàn le.* The train is about to leave the platform.
饭店前面有出租车。 *Fàndiàn qiánmiàn yǒu chūzūchē.* There are taxis in front of the hotel.	我喜欢玩儿滑板。 *Wǒ xǐhuān wánr huábǎn.* I like skateboarding.
前台的小姐很漂亮。 *Qiántái de xiǎojiě hěn piàoliàng.* The girl at the front desk is very pretty.	意大利很漂亮。 *Yìdàlì hěn piàoliàng.* Italy is very beautiful.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Showing Possession with the Structural Particle 的 (*de*)
我的新自行车。
Wǒ de xīn zìxíngchē.
"My new bicycle."

De is a structural particle we use to show possession or ownership. The noun before 的 (*de*) is the owner of the noun after 的 (*de*). For example, to say "my book" in Chinese, one connects 我 *wǒ* ("I") and 书 *shū* ("book") with the particle 的 (*de*): 我的书 (*wǒ de* shū). The word order is always as follows:

[the owner] 的 (*de*) [the owned].

When speaking about family members, we drop 的 (*de*). For example, "my mother" is 我妈妈 (*wǒ māma*).

For Example:

1. 你的车很漂亮。
   Nǐ de chē hěn piàoliàng.
   Your bicycle is very pretty.
2. 他的病好了。
   Tā de bìng hǎo le.
   He has recovered from his illness.
3. 这是谁的东西？
   Zhè shì shéi de dōngxi?
   Whose things are these?
4. 她妈妈很年轻。
   Tā de māma hěn niánqīng.
   Her mother is very young.
5. 我的咖啡呢？
   Wǒ de kāfēi ne?
   What about my coffee?
6. 这辆车的刹车坏了。
   Zhè liàng chē de shāchē huài le.
   The brakes on this car are broken.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Soaring Bicycle Crime Wave

One fact of life of living in China is that if you have a bicycle, it is not if, but when it will get stolen. Because of this grim statistic, you will find old, dilapidated bikes being ridden around the city. Many of these bikes have been purchased secondhand. Most likely, the bike that they purchased was a stolen bike to begin with. There are some pretty heavy-duty locks on the market, but to a thief, it is just a challenge to break. In the middle of the night, a bike thief will descend with a pair of bolt cutters.

As a way to mitigate the problem, special bike parking zones outside of subway stations have been built in Beijing. Every subway will have a special place for you to put your bikes. However, the workers there will rearrange the bikes to conserve space. Since your bike has been moved to a different spot from where you parked it, some people will stop looking for their bikes because they don't have enough time. Others will just give up and stop looking for their bikes all together since they assume the bike was lifted. One fail-safe way to keep a bike safe is to bring it into your home after every ride. Even keeping it locked up within the apartment building is not a guarantee.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #12
We All Scream for Ice Cream in China!

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#12

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 今天真热。
2. B : 我要吃冰淇淋。
3. A : 我也想吃。
4. B : 我请你。

ENGLISH

1. A : Today is really hot.
2. B : I want to eat ice cream.
3. A : I also feel like eating ice cream.
4. B : I'll treat you.

PINYIN

1. A : Jīntiān zhēn rè.
2. B : Wǒ yào chī bīngqílín.
3. A : Wǒ yě xiǎng chī.
4. B : Wǒ qǐng nǐ.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 今天真熱。
2. B : 我要吃冰淇淋。
3. A : 我也想吃。
4. B : 我請你。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
冷	冷	lěng	cold	adjective
热	熱	rè	hot	adjective
凉	凉	liáng	cool	adjective
冰淇淋	冰淇淋	bīngqílín	ice cream	noun
闷	悶	mēn	humid; stuffy	adjective
暖和	暖和	nuánhuo	warm	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

冬天不太冷。 *Dōngtiān bú tài lěng.* Winter isn't that cold.	今天真热。 *Jīntiān zhēn rè.* It's really hot today.
今天有点儿凉。 *Jīntiān yǒudiǎnr liáng.* Today is a little cold.	给我一个香草冰淇淋。 *Gěi wǒ yī ge xiāngcǎo bīngqílín.* Give me a vanilla ice cream.
今天很闷。 *Jīntiān hěn mēn.* Today is very humid.	房间里很暖和。 *Fángjiān lǐ hěn nuǎnhuo.* It's warm inside the room.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Degrees of Like
我要吃冰淇淋.
Wǒ yào chī bīngqílín.
"I want to eat ice cream."

想 and 要 both share a meaning of "to want." However, you can use these two verbs in different situations with slight differences in meaning. For example, 要 indicates this is not the first time that you have done an action or have decided to do the action in the future. 要 has the connotation that "there is some kind of plan" to do this. For example, 我要去北京。 *Wǒ yào qù Běijīng.* ("I want to go to Beijing.") In this context, plans already exist to travel to Beijing. Conversely, 想 is just "to want without any plan": the speaker is not sure if the desire will actually be fulfilled or not. For example, 我想去北京。 *Wǒ xiǎng qù Běijīng.* ("I want to go to Beijing, but I'm not sure if I will finally go there or not.")

For Example:

1. 我要去北京。
Wǒ yào qù Běijīng.
"I want to go to Beijing."

2. 我想休息一下儿。
Wǒ xiǎng xiūxi yí xiàr.
"I'd like a rest."

3. 我要休息一下儿。
Wǒ yào xiūxi yí xiàr.
"I want a rest."

4. 你想吃什么？
Nǐ xiǎng chī shénme?
"What do you feel like eating?"

5. 你要吃什么？
Nǐ yào chī shénme?
"What do you want to eat?"

6. 我想回家。
Wǒ xiǎng huíjiā.
"I wish to go home."

7. 我要回家。
Wǒ yào huíjiā.
"I want to go home."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Electrical Blackouts

The summer in Beijing is hot and dry. Usually the highest temperature will be over forty degrees Celsius on a sunny day. However, the weather forecasts will never say, "Tomorrow will be over forty degrees." The temperature in the weather forecast will always be thirty-eight, thirty-nine, thirty-nine and a half, etc. There is a reason for this. If the temperature goes above forty, then by law, people who work outside are given a reprieve from the heat, and work halts.

During the height of summer, when air conditioner and refrigerator use are at an all time high, forced electrical blackouts will occur. The electricity will cut out at noon in some regions to make sure other people can have electricity to run the air conditioner! Without electricity during a hot day, people will have to get creative to keep cool. Even factories will lose electricity. This technique is relegated to the smaller cities and towns though. Large cities like Beijing and Shanghai do not experience this unique conservation method.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #13
The Clueless Chinese Linguist

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#13

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你会说英语吗？
2. B : 不会。
3. A : 你会说中文吗？
4. B : 不会。
5. A : 骗子!

ENGLISH

1. A : Can you speak English?
2. B : No.
3. A : Can you speak Chinese?
4. B : No.
5. A : Liar!

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?
2. B : Bú huì.
3. A : Nǐ huì shuō zhōngwén ma?
4. B : Bú huì.
5. A : Piànzi!

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你會說英語嗎？
2. B : 不會。
3. A : 你會說中文嗎？
4. B : 不會。
5. A : 騙子!

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
汉语	漢語	hànyǔ	Chinese	noun
英语	英語	yīngyǔ	English	noun
英文	英文	yīngwén	English	noun
中文	中文	Zhōngwén	Chinese	noun
法语	法語	Fǎyǔ	French	noun
德语	德語	Déyǔ	German	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你的汉语不错。 *Nǐ de Hànyǔ bùcuò.* Your Chinese isn't bad.	我不会说英语。 *Wǒ bù huì shuō Yīngyǔ.* I can't speak English.
我要学英文。 *Wǒ yào xué Yīngwén.* I want to learn English.	他的中文很好。 *Tā de zhōngwén hěn hǎo.* His Chinese is very good.
你会说法语吗？ *Nǐ huì shuō Fǎyǔ ma?* Can you speak French?	德国人说德语。 *Déguó rén shuō Déyǔ.* Germans speak German.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 会, *huì* ("To be able to")
你会说中文吗？ *Nǐ huì shuō zhōngwén ma?*
"Can you speak Chinese?"

会 (*Huì*) is an auxiliary verb used to express that one is able to do a certain acquired skill. In English, the verb "can" covers a wide range of situations. Some simple examples include the ability to speak a foreign language such as in the dialogue, 你会说英语吗？*Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?* ("Can you speak English?") Other learned abilities such as playing the piano or cooking food can use the verb 会 (*huì*).

会 (*huì*) precedes the verb: 她会唱歌, *Tā huì chànggē* ("She can sing").

For Example:

1. 我不会做饭。
   Wǒ búhuì zuòfàn.

"I don't know how to cook."

2. 你会不会用电脑？
   Nǐ huìbúhuì yòng diànnǎo?
   "Do you know how to use a computer?"

3. 我会说汉语。
   Wǒ huì shuō hànyǔ.
   "I can speak Chinese."

4. 他不会骑自行车。
   Tā búhuì qí zìxíngchē.
   "He doesn't know how to ride a bike."

5. 你会不会开车？
   Nǐ huìbuhuì kāichē?
   "Are you able to drive a car?"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The English Language in China

Most Chinese people have begun studying English these days, even the taxi drivers. But for many Chinese people, there is another more pressing problem. China has a diverse lexicon of dialects. Often times, people living in the same province but in different villages will have difficulty communicating since their dialects are different. This problem becomes even more exacerbated when people travel from region to region and province to province. The advent of standard Mandarin based on the Northern Beijing dialect was a directive to combat the language confusion.
Some parents see the ability to speak Mandarin as an advantage for their children so they will opt not to speak their local dialect in the house but rather Mandarin. However, the parents' Mandarin isn't that standard, so the inaccuracies will be transmitted to their children. Now the children have a strong accent. They can neither speak their own dialect or proper Mandarin. When they come to Beijing or some other cities in the north, they will encounter some problems because Mandarin speakers will think they are not good learners and their 老乡, *lǎoxiāng* ("fellow villagers") that migrants interact with will not feel comfortable because they cannot speak their dialect.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #14
Lightning Never Strikes Twice

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

14

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 打闪了。
2. B : 快下雨了。
3. A : 带伞吧。
4. B : 我们明天去吧。

ENGLISH

1. A : Lightning strike.
2. B : It's about to rain.
3. A : Bring an umbrella.
4. B : How about we go tomorrow.

PINYIN

1. A : Dǎ shǎn le.
2. B : Kuài xiàyǔ le.
3. A : Dài sǎn ba.
4. B : Wǒmen míngtiān qù ba.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 打閃了。
2. B : 快下雨了。
3. A : 帶傘吧。
4. B : 我們明天去吧。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
快	快	kuài	quickly; fast	adjective
打雷	打雷	dǎléi	to thunder	verb
打闪	打閃	dǎshǎn	to have lightning	verb
风	風	fēng	wind	noun
下雨	下雨	xiàyǔ	to rain	verb
下雪	下雪	xiàxuě	to snow	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

快叫人来。 *Kuài jiào rén lái.* Quick, call for someone to come.	我快到了。 *Wǒ kuài dào le。* I'm almost there.
打雷了！ *Dǎ léi le!* It's thundering.	你看，打闪了。 *Nǐ kàn, dǎ shǎn le.* Look! It's lightning!
现在风很大。 *Xiànzài fēng hěn dà.* It's really windy right now.	昨天下雨了。 *Zuótiān xià yǔ le.* It rained yesterday.
下雪了，我很冷。 *Xiàxuě le, wǒ hěn lěng.* It's snowing and I'm cold.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 快, *kuài* ("About to")
快下雨了。*Kuài xiàyǔ le.*
"It's about to rain."

快 is an adverb that means "about to" or "soon." Usually the particle 了 will follow the adverb. For example, 快下雨了。*Kuài xiàyǔ le.* ("It's about to rain"), or 我快迟到了。 ("I'm about to be late.") 快 can also indicate urgency and imperativeness. 时间快到了。*Shíjiān kuài dào le.* ("Time is about to be up.")

The formula to use with 快 is (Adverb) + 快 + (Verb) + 了

For Example:

1. 快下雨了。
   Kuài xiàyǔ le.
   "It's about to rain."
2. 我的病快好了。
   Wǒ de bìng kuài hǎo le.
   "I'm about to get over my cold."
3. 快下雪了。
   Kuài xiàxuě le.
   "It's going to snow soon."
4. 我快到了。
   Wǒ kuài dào le.
   "I'm going to arrive soon."
5. 他快没时间了。
   Kuài méi shíjiān le.
   "He's about to be out of time."
6. *我快吃完了。*

Wǒ kuài chī wán le.
"I'm about to eat up my meal."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Wacky Weather in Beijing

The first rain of the year is the sign of spring. In Beijing however, the sign of spring doesn't come in the form of rain but sand. Well, it's not Beijing's fault, but we have to say, the air is a little bit...too dirty in spring. Sand is blown across the Gobi desert from outer and inner Mongolia into the coastal regions of China. Recently, a wall of trees is beginning to be erected by the Chinese government to help block the sandstorms.
Beijing has spring rain too, but not as often as gusting wind. The biggest problem encountered in a sand storm is that you will quickly accumulate a thick layer of sand on your clothes. Many people will wear surgical masks to protect their respiratory system from sand. If you find that the weather is quite exceptional, don't hesitate. Go out and seize the day, because you never know when the sandstorms may return.
The best time to be out and about in Beijing is the short autumn. It's not too hot, not too cold, and there are no pesky sandstorms. It is the golden time to take short trips to the hills and gardens around Beijing.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #15
The Broken Refrigerator

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#15

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 啤酒加冰。
2. B : 今天没有冰。
3. A : 为什么没有？
4. B : 冰箱坏了。

ENGLISH

1. A : A beer with ice.
2. B : There's no ice today.
3. A : Why not?
4. B : The refrigerator is broken.

PINYIN

1. A : Píjiǔ jiā bīng.
2. B : Jīntiān méiyǒu bīng.
3. A : Wèishénme méiyǒu?
4. B : Bīngxiāng huài le.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 啤酒加冰。
2. B : 今天沒有冰。
3. A : 為甚麼沒有？
4. B : 冰箱壞了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
芬达	芬達	fēndá	Fanta	noun
可乐	可樂	kělè	cola	noun
雪碧	雪碧	xuěbì	sprite	noun
冰箱	冰箱	bīngxiāng	refrigerator	noun
啤酒	啤酒	píjiǔ	beer	noun
果汁	果汁	guǒzhī	juice	noun
冰	冰	bīng	ice	noun
加	加	jiā	to add	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

她不喝芬达。 *Tā bù hē fēndá.* She doesn't drink Fanta.	可乐加冰。 *Kělè jiā bīng.* Coke with ice.
雪碧很好喝。 *Xuěbì hěn hǎohē.* Sprite tastes good	冰箱里塞满了为过节而准备的食物 *bīngxiāng lǐ sàimǎn le wéi guòjié ér zhǔnbèi de shíwù* The refrigerator is full of food for the holiday.
冰箱磁铁 *bīngxiāng cítiě* refrigerator magnet	带有冷冻室的冰箱 *dàiyǒu lěngdòngshì de bīngxiāng* refrigerator with freezer
那个饥饿的男人在冰箱里找食物。 *Nàge jī'è de nánrén zài bīngxiāng lǐ zhǎo shíwù.* The hungry man is looking for food in the refrigerator.	我家有两个冰箱，一个大冰箱，一个小冰箱。 *Wǒ jiā yǒu liǎng ge bīngxiāng, yī ge dà bīngxiāng, yī ge xiǎo bīngxiāng.* We have two refrigerators in our house, a big one and a small one..
这个女的饿了。他去冰箱里找吃的。 *Zhège nǚ de è le. Tā qù bīngxiāng lǐ zhǎo chī de.* This woman is hungry. He is looking for food in the refrigerator.	我不喝啤酒。 *Wǒ bù hē píjiǔ.* I don't drink beer.
我喜欢喝果汁。 *Wǒ xǐhuān hē guǒzhī.* I like to drink juice.	被冰覆盖 *bèi bīng fùgài* covered in ice

窗户上结了冰花。 *Chuānghu shàng jié le bīnghuā.* Ice has formed on the window.	可乐加冰。 *Kělè jiā bīng.* Coke with ice.
老师加上学生一共20人。 *Lǎoshī jiāshàng xuésheng yīgòng èrshí rén.* There are a total of 20 people including teachers and students.	加一点盐，再加一点黑胡椒。 *Jiā yīdiǎn yán, zài jiā yīdiǎn hēi hújiāo.* Add a little salt, then add a little black pepper.
我在水里加了点儿糖。 *Wǒ zài shuǐ lǐ jiā le diǎnr táng.* I added a bit of sugar to the water.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 加, *jiā* ("To add")
啤酒加冰。 *Píjiǔ jiā bīng.*
"Add ice to the beer."

加 is a verb meaning, "to add." When cooking, we can use 加 to add ingredients such as 加点儿盐, *jiā diǎnr yán* ("Add some salt"), or 加点儿糖, *jiā diǎnr táng* ("Add some surgar"). When ordering drinks at a restaurant or bar, you can use 加 to mean two different ingredients can be added together. 可乐加冰。*Kělè jiā bīng.* ("Coke with ice.") Notice that we do not use the verb 跟 ("with"). If the waiter asks, 加冰吗？*Jiā bīng ma* ("Do you need ice?") you can simply answer by saying, 加冰。*Jiā bīng.*("Yes, I need ice.")

For Example:

1. 可乐加冰。
   Kělè jiā bīng.
   "Soda with ice."
2. 再加点儿糖。
   Zài jiā diǎnr táng.
   "Add a little more sugar."
3. 威士忌加冰。
   Wēishìjì jiābīng.
   "Whiskey and ice."
4. 加糖，不要加盐。
   Jiā táng, búyào jiā yán.
   "Add sugar, no salt."
5. 住单人间要加钱。
   Zhù dānrén jiān yào jiā qián.
   "You need to add money if you want a single room."

6. 老板给我加工资。
   Lǎobǎn gěi wǒ jiā gōngzī.
   "The boss gave me a pay rise."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Hot and Cold Beverages in China

One of the first things a traveler to China may notice is the difference in how beer is consumed and served. If you're lucky, after ordering a beer the waitress will ask if you want a room temperature beer or a cold beer. If you aren't as fortunate, the waitress will bring a warm beer even on a hot day. Chinese people view heat and cold in a health context. Warm drinks are good for your body and overall health, while cold drinks are damaging.
Refrigerators do exist in China and most urban households have one. One peculiar practice in China is by small convenient stores. They will have a handy beverage refrigerator stored with a variety of beverages. But as you open the door, you find that this is only a refrigerator in theory. To your dismay, the refrigerator is not plugged in, and it only serves as a holding case for the beverages.
One further note on cold beverages in China: It is very rare to find ice cubes available in large quantities, if at all. Even in a bar, a cocktail may come with a paltry one or two ice cubes that quickly melt into your beverage, making it even more watered down. Western chain restaurants like KFC and McDonalds will have an ice machine on hand. So if you are craving a chilled drink, just run to you neighborhood golden arches and ask for extra ice.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #16
The Stolen Purse

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#16

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 我的钱包丢了。
2. B : 怎么丢的？
3. A : 被偷了。
4. B : 你真倒霉。

ENGLISH

1. A : I lost my purse.
2. B : How did you lose it?
3. A : It was stolen.
4. B : You're really unfortunate.

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒ de qiánbāo diū le.
2. B : Zěnme diū de?
3. A : Bèi tōu le.
4. B : Nǐ zhēn dǎoméi.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 我的錢包丟了。
2. B : 怎麼丟的？
3. A : 被偷了。
4. B : 你真倒霉。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
丢	丟	diū	to lose	verb
手机	手機	shǒujī	cellphone	noun
钥匙	鑰匙	yàoshi	keys	noun
倒霉	倒霉	dǎoméi	unlucky	adjective
钱包	錢包	qiánbāo	wallet	noun
自行车	自行車	zìxíngchē	bicycle	noun
偷	偷	tōu	to steal	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

什么东西丢了？ *Shénme dōngxi diū le?* What's lost?	我的手机是黑色的。 *Wǒ de shǒujī shì hēisè de.* My cell phone is black.
你有手机吗？ *Nǐ yǒu shǒujī ma?* Do you have a mobile phone?	这不是我的钥匙。 *Zhè bù shì wǒ de yàoshi.* This is not my key.
这个人真倒霉。 *Zhège rén zhēn dǎoméi.* This person is really unlucky.	我有两个钱包，一个公用，一个私用。 *Wǒ yǒu liǎng ge qiánbāo, yī gè gōngyòng,yī gè sīyòng.* I have 2 wallets: a work wallet and a personal wallet.
钱包在桌子上。 *Qiánbāo zài zhuōzi shàng.* The wallet is on the table.	他把我的钱包偷走了。 *Tā bǎ wǒ de qiánbāo tōu zǒu le.* He stole my wallet.
我可以借你的自行车吗？ *Wǒ kěyǐ jiè nǐ de zìxíngchē ma?* Can I borrow your bicycle?	他把我的钱包偷走了。 *Tā bǎ wǒ de qiánbāo tōu zǒu le.* He stole my wallet.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 怎么, *zěn me* ("How...")
怎么丢的？zěnme diū de?
"How did you lose it?"

怎么 (*Zěn me*) 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.

怎么 (*Zěn me*) does not always occur before the first verb in a sentence with more than one verb. For example, in the question, "How do you plan to return home?" the proper way to say this in Chinese would be 你打算怎么回家 (*nǐ dǎ suàn zěn me huí jiā*). Notice that 怎么 (*zěn me*) comes after the verb 打算 (*dǎ suàn*) but before the verb 回 (*huí*). This is because *zěn me* functions like an adverb. The speaker wanted to know "how the listener goes home" and not "how the listener plans." 怎么 (*Zěn me*) will typically occur after psychological verbs but before action verbs and directional verbs.

Formula for using 怎么:

(subject) + *zěn me* + (verb phrase)

(subject) + (psychological verb) + *zěn me* + (verb phrase)

For Example:

1. 怎么用这个相机？
   Zěn me yòng zhè ge xiàng jī.
   "How do you use this camera?"
2. 她知道怎么洗去油渍。
   Tā zhī dào zěn me xǐ qù yóu zì.
   "She knows how to wash out oil stains."
3. 你打算怎么过这个暑假？
   Nǐ dǎ suàn zěn me guò zhè ge shǔ jià?
   "How do you plan on spending your summer holidays?"
4. 怎么丢的？
   Zěnme diū de?
   "How did you lose it?
5. 去故宫怎么走？
   Qù Gùgōng zěnme zǒu?
   "How do you want to go to the Forbidden City?"
6. 这个怎么用？
   Zhègè zěnme yòng?
   "How do you use this?"
7. 你想怎么做？
   Nǐ xiǎng zěnme zuò?
   "How do you feel like doing this?"
8. 我不知道怎么办。
   Wǒ bù zhīdào zěnme bàn.
   "I don't know what to do."
9. 这个怎么卖？
   Zhègè zěnme mài?
   "How is this sold?"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Unfortunately, in China, theft is always an issue. Items such as cell phones, bicycles, and purses are often targets of theft. If something is stolen, there is often little legal recourse that can be taken. That is why prevention is key to stopping theft. If you own a bicycle, it is best to take it into your apartment rather than leave it outside. One of the responses to theft is that most apartments will have steel bars outside their windows. While home burglaries are not a major problem in China, you can still find apartments on the fifth floor having bars.

Another feature of China, which may or may not have to do with theft, is the ever-present security camera. If your bike is stolen or your car broken into, almost every square inch of the city is covered by security cameras. This feature still does not provide one hundred percent coverage and cars in well-lit parking lots with visible security cameras will still get broken into with no suspect found.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #17
Bright Lights, Big City

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- Dialogue - Chinese
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#17

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 上海真大！
2. B : 楼也很高。
3. A : 对，真高啊！
4. B : 小心！车！

ENGLISH

1. A : Shanghai is really big.
2. B : The buildings are really tall.
3. A : Right, really tall.
4. B : Careful, car.

PINYIN

1. A : Shànghǎi zhēn dà!
2. B : Lóu yě hěn gāo.
3. A : Duì, zhēn gāo a!
4. B : Xiǎoxīn! Chē!

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 上海真大！
2. B : 樓也很高。
3. A : 對，真高啊！
4. B : 小心！車！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
真	真	zhēn	really	adverb
超市	超市	chāoshì	supermarket	noun
马路	馬路	mǎlù	street	noun
车	車	chē	car	noun
商场	商場	shāngchǎng	mall	noun
楼	樓	lóu	building	noun
很	很	hěn	very	adverb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我真饿。 *Wǒ zhēn è.* I'm really hungry.	尽管没有多少顾客，这家超市一天24小时都营业。 *Jǐnguǎn méiyǒu duōshǎo gùkè, zhè jiā chāoshì yītiān èrshísì xiǎoshí dōu yíngyè.* Although there are hardly any customers, the supermarket is open 24 hours a day.
我去超市买东西。 *Wǒ qù chāoshì mǎi dōngxi.* I'm going to the supermarket to buy things.	马路很宽。 *Mǎlù hěn kuān.* The street is very wide.
我星期一开车去上班，其他时候都是乘火车。 *Wǒ xīngqī yī kāi chē qù shàng bān, qítā shíhòu dōu shì chéng huǒchē.* I drive my car to work on Mondays, but take the train the rest of the week.	这个男人正在推车。 *Zhègè nánrén zhèngzài tuī chē.* The man is pushing the car.
那个男的在开车。 *Nà ge nán de zài kāi chē.* The man is driving a car.	狗正在上车。 *Gǒu zhèngzài shàng chē.* The dog is getting in the car.
那是一辆蓝色的两个车门的车。 *Nà shì yī liàng lánsè de liǎng gè chēmén de chē.* It's a blue, two-door car.	你的车很漂亮。 *Nǐ de chē hěn piàoliang.* Your car is very good-looking.
这个商场真大。 *Zhège shāngchǎng zhēn dà.* This mall is really big.	这儿有很多大楼。 *Zhèr yǒu hěn duō dà lóu.* There are lots of tall buildings here.

这座楼很高。

Zhè zuò lóu hěn gāo.

This building is very tall.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Adverbs of Degree
上海真大！*Shànghǎi zhēn dà!*
"Shanghai is really big!"

Both 真 and 很 are adverbs of degree here. 很 means "very" and indicates a considerable degree. 真 means "really" and stresses both the authenticity and a high degree. In Chinese, 真 is definitely stronger than 很. You can use 真 in exclamatory sentences, but we usually use 很 in statements. For instance, 她很漂亮, *Tā hěn piàoliàng* ("She's very beautiful"). Using 真 instead, we get 她真漂亮! *Tā zhēn piàoliàng!* ("She's really beautiful!") Here this is an exclamation and the degree of beauty is more stressed.

Subject + 真/很 + (Adjective) or (Adverb)

For Example:

1. 她很漂亮。
   Tā hěn piàoliàng.
   "She's very pretty."
2. 她真漂亮。
   Tā zhēn piàoliàng.
   "She's really pretty."
3. 这个人很讨厌。
   Zhè gè rén hěn tǎoyàn.
   "This person is very annoying."
4. 这个人真讨厌。
   Zhè gè rén zhēn tǎoyàn.
   "This person is really annoying."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Rise of the Skyscraper
Chinese cities are growing at a dizzying pace. Skyscrapers seem to appear out of nowhere and elevated highways stand suspended in the air. For most people visiting China, this site can be overwhelming. Just as New York City often draws the stares of tourists upwards to gaze at the skyscrapers, so too does Shanghai feel impressive.

However, the labor used to build these brand new skyscrapers in Chinese cities is drawn from the workers in the countryside moving to the cities where more opportunities lay. For many of these migrant workers, coming to the big city can feel like being in a different country altogether. The migrant workers live in a gray area within the city since China holds a household registration system that links people to the places they were born. Legal rights for migrant workers are few and far between, and many laborers face dangerous working conditions. Most of the pay that the workers make is sent back home in the form of remittances.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #18
The Easy Way

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- Dialogue - Chinese
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#18

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 这个怎么用？
2. B : 很简单， 你看。
3. A : 这么简单？谢谢！
4. B : 不客气。

ENGLISH

1. A : How do you use this?
2. B : It's very simple, watch.
3. A : So simple? Thanks.
4. B : Don't mention it.

PINYIN

1. A : Zhègè zěnme yòng?
2. B : Hěn jiǎndān, nǐ kàn.
3. A : Zhème jiǎndān? Xièxie!
4. B : Bú kèqì.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 這個怎麼用？
2. B : 很簡單， 你看。
3. A : 這麼簡單？謝謝！
4. B : 不客氣。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
简单	簡單	jiǎndān	simple	adjective
容易	容易	róngyì	easy	adjective
难	難	nán	difficult	adjective
方便	方便	fāngbiàn	convenient	adjective
麻烦	麻煩	máfan	troublesome, inconvenient	adjective
不客气	不客氣	bù kèqì	don't be polite	verb phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

这件事情很简单。 *Zhè jiàn shìqing hěn jiǎndān.* This matter is very simple.	一人照顾两个孩子是很不容易的。 *Yī rén zhàogù liǎng ge háizi shì hěn bù róngyì de.* To take care of two children by oneself is really not that easy.
这个问题不容易。 *Zhège wèntí bù róngyì.* This problem isn't easy.	这个问题很难回答。 *Zhège wèntí hěn nán huídá.* That is a difficult question to answer.
他正在用一个很难的计算机程序。 *Tā zhèngzài yòng yí gè hěn nán de jìsuànjī chéngxù.* He is using a difficult computer program.	很难的书 *hěn nán de shū* difficult book
困难的工作 *kùnnán de gōngzuò* difficult job	非常难 *fēicháng nán* very difficult
英语很难。 *Yīngyǔ hěn nán.* English is difficult.	难题 *nántí* difficult problem
很难吗？ *Hěn nán ma?* Is it difficult?	地铁很方便。 *Dìtiě hěn fāngbiàn.* The subway is very convenient.
出租车很方便。 *Chūzūchē hěn fāngbiàn.* Taxis are convenient.	这些事情很麻烦。 *Zhèxiē shìqing hěn máfan.* These matters are very troublesome.

	没事，不客气。 *Méishì, bù kèqi.* It's nothing. Don't be polite about it.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 这么, *zhème* ("So," "Such")
这么简单？*Zhème jiǎndān?*
"So simple?"

这么 is an adverb. We put it in front of a verb or adjective indicating high degree.

这么 means, "so, such, like this." For instance, 他为什么这么慢？*Tā wèishénme zhème màn* ("Why is he this slow?"), 他这么做是对的。*Tā zhème zuò shì duì de.* ("He acts in this way is correct"), or 我没有见过这么漂亮的东西。*Wǒ méiyǒu jiànguò zhème piàoliàng de dōngxi.* ("I've never seen anything this beautiful").

For Example:

1. 这么简单？
Zhème jiǎndān?
"This easy?"

2. 这么早！
Zhème zǎo!
"So early!"

3. 她怎么这么漂亮？
Tā zěnme zhème piàoliàng?
"How is she so pretty?"

4. 天气这么好，我们去玩儿吧。
Tiānqì zhème hǎo, wǒmen qù wánr ba.
"The weather is so nice. Let's go out for fun."

5. 你怎么这么晚？
Nǐ zěnme zhème wǎn?
"How are you so late?"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Becoming Adjusted to Life in China

Getting adjusted to life in China can take some time. Often, the system and logic used back home is useless when dealing with obstacles and problems in daily life in China. Simple daily tasks such as using the remote control or locking a door can be mind-boggling endeavors. The best prescription is to exercise patience and to ask questions, even if you feel your question is silly. Looking silly is just something that comes with the territory when living in a foreign country.

For example, using a cell phone. China operates on a debit system and you must manually add money to your SIM card by adding money. Money is added by purchasing a card at a local convenience store, calling a number, and entering in your personal information. After a while though, instances like this become second nature and you adopt, adjust, and assimilate into the normal flow of things.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #19
The Hotpot Dinner

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#19

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 昨天你吃什么了？
2. B : 我吃火锅了。
3. A : 很贵吗？
4. B : 对。 我一年吃一次。

ENGLISH

1. A : What did you eat yesterday?
2. B : I ate hotpot.
3. A : Was it expensive?
4. B : Yes. I can only eat it once a year.

PINYIN

1. A : Zuótiān nǐ chī shénme le?
2. B : Wǒ chī huǒguō le.
3. A : Hěn guì ma?
4. B : Duì. Wǒ yìnián chī yícì.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 昨天你吃甚麼了？
2. B : 我吃火鍋了。
3. A : 很貴嗎？
4. B : 對。 我一年吃一次。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
火锅	火鍋	huǒguō	hotpot	noun
快餐	快餐	kuàicān	fast food	noun
中餐	中餐	zhōngcān	Chinese food	noun
西餐	西餐	xīcān	Western food	noun
料理	料理	liàolǐ	cuisine	noun
次	次	cì	time	measure word

SAMPLE SENTENCES

火锅太贵了。 *Huǒguō tài guì le.* Hotpot is too expensive.	快餐店 *kuàicāndiàn* fast food restaurant
我偶尔很想吃快餐。 *Wǒ ǒuěr hěn xiǎng chī kuàicān.* I crave fast food every once in a while.	汉堡跟薯条被认为是快餐。 *Hànbǎo gēn shǔtiáo bèi rènwéishì kuàicān.* Burgers and fries are considered fast food.
快餐 *kuàicān* fast food meal	快餐不健康。 *Kuàicān bú jiànkāng.* Fast food isn't healthy.
中国菜很好吃！ *Zhōngguó cài hěn hǎochī!* Chinese food is delicious!	他想要中国菜，但她想要意大利菜。 *Tā xiǎng yào Zhōngguó cài, dàn tā xiǎng yào Yìdàlì cài.* He wants Chinese food, but she wants Italian.
你喜欢吃中餐吗？ *Nǐ xǐhuān chī zhōngcān ma?* Do you like eating Chinese food?	牛排和马铃薯料理是西餐的典型食物。 *Niúpái hé mǎlíngshǔ liàolǐ shì xīcān de diǎnxíng shíwù.* Steak and potato dishes are a great example of western food.
西餐厅 *xīcāntīng* western food restaurant	我喜欢西餐。 *Wǒ xǐhuān xīcān.* I like western food.
日本料理怎么样？ *Rìběn liàolǐ zěnmeyàng?* How about Japanese cuisine?	我一天洗一次澡。 *Wǒ yì tiān xǐ yí cì zǎo.* I shower once a day.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Time Intervals
我一年吃一次。 *Wǒ yìnián chī yícì.*
"I eat it once a year."

---

cì (次) is a verbal measure word indicating the frequency of an action. Furthermore 次 can be combined with another time word such as 年 (*nián*), 周, or 天 to indicate that an action happens at repeated intervals. Take this example: 我一年吃一次。*Wǒ yìnián chī yícì.* ("I eat it once a year"). We repeat the action with the same frequency, yet the formation in Chinese is different. The construct is time + verb + times + object.

For sentences using a verb object phrase, we place the time repetition in between the verb and the object it takes. For instance, 他一天打三次电话。*Tā yì tiān dǎ sān cì diànhuà.* ("He calls three times a day"). The verb object 打电话 (to make a telephone call") we split. The new construct is 打 + "repetition" + 电话.

For Example:

1. 我一周做一次饭。
Wǒ yì zhōu zuò yí cì fàn.
"Once a week I cook food."

2. 我一天洗一次澡。
Wǒ yì tiān xǐ yí cì zǎo.
"I shower once a day."

3. 他一周看一次电影。
Tā yì zhōu kàn yí cì diànyǐng.
"He watches one movie a week."

4. 我姐姐一年去两次中国。
wǒ jiějie yì nián qù liǎng cì Zhōngguó.
"My older sister goes to China twice a year."

5. 我三天用一次。
Wǒ sān tiān yòng yí cì.
"I use it every three days."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Hotpot

Hotpot is a specialty dish of China. This cuisine originated along the river banks of Sichuan, where poor river workers needed a warm and filling meal at night. The meal is made up of a large bowl placed in the center of a table. Underneath the table sits a gas burner that cooks the bowl. Different types of soup can be poured into the bowl to give diners a different taste. Hot pot is infamous for its spicy flavor. Sichuan peppers, previously banned in the U.S., are abundant. A large variety of food can be cooked within the pot. Vegetables, meat, tofu, and entire fish are put into the pot to cook. After a few minutes, the food is ready to eat. Usually a large ladle is used to scoop out the pieces of vegetables and meat. Often times an apron is suggested since oil from the soup can spill and ruin even the most careful of eaters.
In Sichuan, it is not uncommon to find men eating hotpot shirtless. Since both the weather is humid and the food insanely spicy, it is culturally accepted to shed a layer of clothing.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #20
The Not So Sweet Tooth

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#20

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 来一杯奶昔吧？
2. B : 我不喜欢甜的。
3. A : 来一个圣代？
4. B : 我说了，我不喜欢甜的。

ENGLISH

1. A : Want a milkshake?
2. B : I don't like sweet things.
3. A : Do you want a sundae?
4. B : I said, I don't like sweet things.

PINYIN

1. A : Lái yì bēi nǎixī ba?
2. B : Wǒ bù xǐhuān tián de.
3. A : Lái yí gè shèngdài?
4. B : Wǒ shuō le, wǒ bù xǐhuān tián de.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 來一杯奶昔吧？
2. B : 我不喜歡甜的。
3. A : 來一個聖代？
4. B : 我說了，我不喜歡甜的。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
奶昔	奶昔	nǎixī	milk shake	noun
圣代	聖代	shèngdài	Sundae	noun
奶茶	奶茶	nǎichá	milk tea	noun
糖	糖	táng	sugar	noun
甜	甜	tián	sweet	adjective
杯	杯	bēi	glass	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

奶昔很好喝。 *Nǎixī hěn hǎohē.* Milk shakes are tasty.	我要一个圣代。 *Wǒ yào yī ge shèngdài.* I want a sundae.
来一杯奶茶。 *Lái yī bēi nǎichá.* Bring me a glass of milk tea.	他不吃糖。 *Tā bù chī táng.* He doesn't eat sugar.
我不喜欢甜的。 *Wǒ bù xǐhuān tián de.* I don't like sweet things.	一杯咖啡多少钱？ *Yī bēi kāfēi duōshǎo qián?* How much is a cup of coffee?

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 来 *lái* ("To bring")
来一杯奶昔吧？ *Lái yì bēi nǎixī ba?*
"Want a milkshake?"

来 is a verb, which means, "to come." For example, 我来北京 *Wǒ lái Běijīng* ("I'm coming to Beijing") and 稍等，来了！*Shāoděng, lái le!(*"Wait a minute, I'm coming!") But when 来 is used when purchasing things at a restaurant or store, the meaning of 来 changes to "bring." 来一瓶啤酒！(*Lái yì píng píjiǔ!*) literally, it is translated as, "Come a bottle of beer!" If you want to say, "Give me a cup of green tea," say, 来一杯绿茶。

For Example:

1. 来一杯奶昔吧？
   Lái yì bēi nǎixī ba?
   "How about a milkshake?"
2. 来两个苹果。
   Lái liǎng gè píngguǒ.
   "Bring two apples."

3. 给我来一杯咖啡。
   Gěi wǒ lái yì bēi kāfēi.
   "Bring me a cup of coffee."
4. 给我来一瓶啤酒。
   Gěi wǒ lái yì píng píjiǔ.
   "Bring me a bottle of beer."
5. 来两个汉堡。
   Lái liǎng gè hànbǎo.
   "Bring two hamburgers."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Ice Cream in China

Ice cream is loved all over the world. China is no exception. It is common to find vendors alongside the street selling all sorts of candy, sodas, and ice cream. One company that has taken advantage of this habit is McDonalds. They have adapted their lineup of McFlurries and sundaes to meet the tastes of Chinese consumers. Another company that has also done well in the ice cream market in China is Haagen-Dazs. People are willing to pay upwards of 50RMB for one scoop of Haagen-Dazs ice cream. Other companies such as Cold Stone creamery are trying to make their mark in China. Since dairy products are not a Chinese specialty, foreign brands still maintain the advantage.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #21
Buy Brand China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#21

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 你的电脑好轻啊！
2. B : 这是新款。
3. A : 很贵吗？
4. B : 不贵。是国产的。

ENGLISH

1. A : Your computer is very light.
2. B : This is the new model.
3. A : Was it expensive?
4. B : No. It's a Chinese brand.

PINYIN

1. A : Nǐ de diànnǎo hǎo qīng a!
2. B : Zhè shì xīnkuǎn.
3. A : Hěn guì ma?
4. B : Bú guì. Shì guóchǎn de.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 你的電腦好輕啊！
2. B : 這是新款。
3. A : 很貴嗎？
4. B : 不貴。是國產的。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
键盘	鍵盤	jiànpán	keyboard	noun
屏幕	屏幕	píngmù	screen	noun
鼠标	鼠標	shǔbiāo	mouse	noun
硬盘	硬盤	yìngpán	hard drive	noun
耳机	耳機	ěrjī	headphones	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我的键盘不好用。 *Wǒ de jiànpán bù hǎo yòng.* My keyboard doesn't work well.	屏幕太脏了。 *Píngmù tài zāng le.* This screen is too dirty.
这个鼠标坏了。 *Zhège shǔbiāo huài le.* This mouse is broken.	你的硬盘多大？ *Nǐ de yìngpán duō dà?* How big is your hard drive?
白色耳机 *báisè ěrjī* white earphones	这些耳机伤害我的耳朵。 *Zhèxiē ěrjī shānghài wǒ de ěrduo.* These earphones hurt my ears.
那个耳机好用吗？ *Nàge ěrjī hǎoyòng ma?* Does that headphone work well?	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 好 *hǎo* (Adverb of Degree- "Very")
你的电脑好轻啊！*Nǐ de diànnǎo hǎo qīng a!*
"Your computer is very light."

We usually use 好 as an adjective which means, "good." However, recently, 好 now can function as an adverb taking the same meaning as 很. For example: 这朵花很红, *Zhè duǒ huā hěn hóng.* ("This flower is red"). Here, 很 is functioning as "is," and not "very." If this same sentence were to use 好 the meaning would change. For instance, 这朵花好红啊。*Zhè duǒ huā hǎo hóng ā.* ("This flower is very red"). 好 can have a stronger and more emphatic connotation than 很. One thing should be noticed: 好 as an adverb is generally used by women. Also, the older generation will not use 好.

For Example:

1. 你的电脑好轻啊。
   Nǐ de diànnǎo hǎo qīng ā.

"Your computer is very light."

2. 他好年轻啊。
   Tā hǎo niánqīng a.
   "He's very young."

3. 你好漂亮呀。
   Nǐhǎo piàoliàng ya.
   "You're so pretty."

4. 那个地方好干净啊。
   Nà gè dìfāng hǎo gānjìng ā.
   "That place is very clean."

5. 小狗好可爱啊。
   Xiǎogǒu hǎo kěài ā.
   "The puppy is very cute."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Computer Trends in China

Laptops are one of the hottest selling items in Mainland China. Sought out for their portability and usability, college students and professionals alike are scooping up the latest models to come off the production lines. The biggest manufacturer of laptops in China by far is Lenovo. As of February 2010, Lenovo owns over thirty-three percent of the PC market in China. The costs of PCs and laptops have made them affordable for the burgeoning middle class. Government subsidies for electronic purchases also boost consumption and sales. Taiwanese brands such as Acer is a popular seller for their lightweight and dependability.
Another computer brand that is steadily rising in China is Apple. Aside from Flagship stores in Beijing, across the country authorized resellers of Apple products are meeting demand with supply. Apple however is still a small fish in a big sea with only a small percent of forward thinking users. Many Chinese will run a Microsoft operating system on their Macintosh due to the incompatibility constraints that having an Apple poses.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #22
Chinese Colors

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#22

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 这件蓝色的怎么样？
2. B : 有点儿大。
3. A : 那件绿色的呢？
4. B : 太难看了。

ENGLISH

1. A : What do you think about this blue one?
2. B : It's a little big.
3. A : What about that green one?
4. B : Too ugly.

PINYIN

1. A : Zhè jiàn lánsè de zěnmeyàng?
2. B : Yǒu diǎnr dà.
3. A : Nà jiàn lǜsè de ne?
4. B : Tài nánkàn le.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 這件藍色的怎麼樣？
2. B : 有點兒大。
3. A : 那件綠色的呢？
4. B : 太難看了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
难吃	難吃	nán chī	taste awful	adjective
难看	難看	nánkàn	ugly; look awful	adjective
黑色	黑色	hēisè	black	noun
绿色	綠色	lǜsè	green	noun
白色	白色	báisè	white	noun
颜色	顏色	yánsè	color	noun
蓝色	藍色	lánsè	blue	noun
红色	紅色	hóngsè	red	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

这家店的东西真难吃。 *Zhè jiā diàn de dōngxi zhēn nánchī.* Food in this restaurant tastes bad.	你的毛衣很难看。 *Nǐ de máoyī hěn nánkàn.* Your sweater is very ugly.
我的手机是黑色的。 *Wǒ de shǒujī shì hēisè de.* My cell phone is black.	绿色很漂亮。 *Lǜsè hěn piàoliàng.* Green is very pretty.
他有一件白色的运动衫。 *Tā yǒu yī jiàn báisè de yùndòngshān.* He has a white sports jersey.	有色染剂 *yǒusè rǎnjì* dye a color
最喜欢的颜色 *zuì xǐhuān de yánsè* favorite color	你最喜欢的颜色是什么？ *Nǐ zuì xǐhuān de yánsè shì shénme?* What's your favorite color?
粉红色是我最不喜欢的颜色。 *Fěnhóngsè shì wǒ zuì bù xǐhuān de yánsè.* Pink is my least favorite color.	我喜欢蓝色。 *Wǒ xǐhuān lánsè.* I like the color blue.
中国人喜欢红色。 *Zhōngguó rén xǐhuān hóngsè.* Chinese people like red.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 难 *nán* ("Negative Prefix")
太难看了。
Tài nánkàn le.
"Too ugly."

难 (*Nán*～) is a phrase used to express that an action is unpleasant or has a negative connotation. It's formed by adding an action verb after *nán*. The phrase functions like an adjective-it's usually used to modify nouns and it can be preceded by degree adverbs like 非常 (*fēi cháng*) and 很 (*hěn*) and 太.

Several verb combinations with *nán* have become set phrases, such as 难吃 *nánchī* ("bad-tasting"), 难看, *nánkàn* ("ugly"), 难听, *nántīng* ("awful-sounding"), etc.

Conversely, we use the adverb 好 (*hǎo*) to express that an action is good and has a negative connotation. 好 functions exactly the same as 难 in the fact that it can be used as a set phrase such as 好吃 *hǎochī* ("tasty"), 好看, *hǎokàn* ("beautiful"), and 好听, *hǎotīng* ("pleasant sounding").

For Example:

1. 太难看了。
   Tài nánkàn le.
   "That's too ugly."
2. 这首歌很难听。
   Zhè shǒu gē hěn nántīng.
   "This song sounds horrible."
3. 味道很难闻。
   Wèidào hěn nánwén.
   "It smells awful."
4. 这个菜很难吃。
   Zhègè cài hěn nánchī.
   "This dish tastes bad."
5. 你很好看。
   Nǐ hěn hǎokàn.
   "You're very pretty."
6. 这首歌很好听。
   Zhè shǒu gē hěn hǎotīng.
   "This song is really good."
7. 饭很好吃。
   Fàn hěn hǎochī.
   "This food is very delicious."
8. 香水很好闻。
   Xiāngshuǐ hěn hǎo wén.
   "The perfume smells really good."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

"Crazy" Colors in China

In China, the color green and red we will never put together in an outfit. Old Chinese villagers may think both green and red are beautiful colors and if they put them together, it will turn into the most beautiful thing. However, in the cities, the fashion faux pas of red and green has a saying behind it - 红配绿，赛狗屎, which means, "If you put the two colors together, the thing will become the same as crap."
Also in Peking opera, if a female character wore the two colors at the same time, she is designated as being insane in the opera. That is to say, that "green and red" is a sign of a psychological problem.
Nowadays, only the Christmas theme outfits of red and green are not taken as "crazy." So don't put anything with green and red together except during Christmas if you are trying to appear as a normal person in China.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #23
High Tech China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#23

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 老公，我要新手机！
2. B : 你的手机很新。
3. A : 但是不好看。
4. B : 我没钱，你自己买吧。

ENGLISH

1. A : Husband, I want a new cell phone.
2. B : Your cell phone is really new.
3. A : But it's ugly.
4. B : I don't have any money, you can buy one yourself.

PINYIN

1. A : Lǎogōng, wǒ yào xīn shǒujī!
2. B : Nǐ de shǒujī hěn xīn.
3. A : Dànshì bù hǎokàn.
4. B : Wǒ méi qián, nǐ zìjǐ mǎi ba.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 老公，我要新手機！
2. B : 你的手機很新。
3. A : 但是不好看。
4. B : 我沒錢，你自己買吧

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
相机	相機	xiàngjī	camera	noun
手机	手機	shǒujī	cellphone	noun
手表	手錶	shǒubiǎo	watch	noun
电脑	電腦	diànnǎo	computer	noun
音箱	音箱	yīnxiāng	speakers	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

这是他的相机。 *Zhè shì tā de xiàngjī.* This is his camera.	我不想玩手机啦，我想和你一起出去散步。 *Wǒ bù xiǎng wán shǒujī la, wǒ xiǎng hé nǐ yīqǐ chūqù sànbù.* I don't want to play with the cellphone, I want to take a walk with you.
对不起，我的手机没电了。 *Duìbuqǐ, wǒ de shǒujī méi diàn le.* I am sorry, but my phone is out of battery.	他的手机被偷了。 *Tā de shǒujī bèi tōu le.* His cellphone was stolen.
我的手机很便宜。 *Wǒ de shǒujī hěn piányi.* My cell phone is very inexpensive.	这块手表是名牌。 *Zhè kuài shǒubiǎo shì míngpái.* This watch is from a famous brand.
你有电脑吗？ *Nǐ yǒu diànnǎo ma?* Do you have a computer?	我电脑的音箱不好。 *Wǒ diànnǎo de yīnxiāng bù hǎo.* My computer's speakers are not good.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 自己, *zìjǐ* ("Oneself")
我没钱，你自己买吧。*Wǒ méi qián, nǐ zìjǐ mǎi ba.*
"I don't have any money, you can buy one yourself."

自己 (*zìjǐ*) is a pronoun meaning, "oneself." It is commonly used with other pronouns such as 你 (*nǐ*), 我 (*wǒ*), and 他 (*tā*). For example, "myself" is 我自己, "himself" is 他自己, and "yourself" is 你自己. So "I will go there by myself" is 我自己去, literally, "myself go." It's the same in the following sentences: 我自己工作。*Wǒ zìjǐ gōngzuò* ("I work by myself") and 你自己解决问题吧。*Nǐ zìjǐ jiějué wèntí ba* ("How about you solve the problem by yourself?") If 自己 is used by itself without 你 我 他, the meaning changes to "everybody themselves." For example, 自己的事情自己做。*Zìjǐ de shìqíng zìjǐ zuò.* ("Everybody should do their own job by themselves.")

For Example:

1. 我没钱，你自己买吧。
   Wǒ méi qián, nǐ zìjǐ mǎi ba.
   "I don't have any money. You buy it yourself."
2. 他自己走了。
   Tā zìjǐ zǒu le.
   "He's gone by himself."
3. 我自己去买东西。
   Wǒ zìjǐ qù mǎi dōngxi.
   "I'm going myself to buy some things."
4. 你自己干吧。
   Nǐ zìjǐ gàn ba.
   "You do it yourself."
5. 我自己工作。
   Wǒ zìjǐ gōngzuò.
   "I'll work by myself."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Cell Phone Turnaround

Cell phones in China are considered to be on the front lines of status in China. Your cell phone is one of the first things that can be seen to signify you are tech savvy as well as how deep your pockets are. Cell phones are also one of the main devices that Chinese people use to access the Internet. Song downloads and games are also quite popular and make up a good deal of revenue for the Chinese telecommunications companies.
To meet the demand of cell phone users, numerous cell phone shops line the streets. Large electronics districts are dotted throughout the city in which you can find any model of phone along with accessories. The gray market also can be found in these areas. Since the iPhone wasn't officially released in China until late 2009, many illegally imported phones from Hong Kong and elsewhere were available for purchase, albeit at a substantially higher price. Apple now has a contract set up with China Unicom, but the price, along with limited Wi-Fi and 3G coverage, serve to constrain growth.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #24
Stargazing in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#24

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 我看不见星星。
2. B : 为什么？
3. A : 云太多了。
4. B : 那不是云，是污染。

ENGLISH

1. A : I can't see the stars
2. B : Why not?
3. A : There's so many clouds.
4. B : Those aren't clouds, that's pollution.

PINYIN

1. A : Wǒ kànbújiàn xīngxing.
2. B : Wèishénme?
3. A : Yún tài duō le.
4. B : Nà bú shì yún, shì wūrǎn.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 我看不見星星。
2. B : 為甚麼？
3. A : 雲太多了。
4. B : 那不是雲，是污染。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
星星	星星	xīngxing	stars	noun
太阳	太陽	tàiyáng	sun	noun
月亮	月亮	yuèliang	moon	noun
云	雲	yún	clouds	noun
污染	污染	wūrǎn	pollution	noun
雾	霧	wù	fog	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你看，那颗星星。 *Nǐ kàn, nà kē xīngxing.* Look at that star!	今天太阳很好。 *Jīntiān tàiyáng hěn hǎo.* The sun is shining brightly today.
今天的月亮又大又圆。 *jīntiān de yuèliàng yòu dà yòu yuán .* The moon today looks big and round.	月亮代表我的心。 *Yuèliàng dàibiǎo wǒ de xīn.* The moon represents my heart.
天上没有云。 *Tiānshàng méiyǒu yún.* There are no clouds in the sky.	空气很污染。 *Kōngqì hěn wūrǎn.* The air is very polluted.
今天有雾。 *Jīntiān yǒu wù.* Today is foggy.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 太多, *tài duō* ("So Many")
云太多了。 *Yún tài duō le.*
"There's so many clouds."

太...了 (*tài ...le*) can be used to modify adjectives, certain verbs, auxiliary verbs, and phrases meaning, "too," or "excessively."

For Example:

1. 东西太多了。
   Dōngxi tài duō le.
   "There are too many things."

2. 这个人太丑了。
   Zhè gè rén tài chǒu le.
   "This person is excessively ugly."

It can also be used to modify words or phrases with a laudatory sense, meaning, "really," or "extremely."

For Example:

1. 你人太好了。
   Nǐ rén tài hǎo le
   "You are really nice."
2. 这个东西太珍贵了。
   Zhègè dōngxi tài zhēnguì le
   "This thing is really precious."

Formula: noun or/and verb + 太 + adjective + 了.

For Example:

1. 云太多了。
   Yún tài duō le.
   "There's too many clouds."
2. 车太多了。
   Chē tài duō le.
   "There's too many cars."
3. 人太多了，工作太少了。
   Rén tài duō le, gōngzuò tài shǎo le.
   "There's too many people, and not enough work."
4. 东西太多了。
   Dōngxi tài duō le.
   "There's too many things."
5. 你的行李太多了。
   Nǐ de xínglitài duō le.
   "You have too much luggage."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Blue Sky Days in China

Throughout China, and especially in city centers, air pollution is a major problem. Pollution from coal plants and from carbon emissions float into the sky and will create a thick layer of smog and haze. The contrast between a sunny and clear day can be quite stark when examined next to a smog day. One way to measure air quality is to examine PM (Particulate Matter) 10 and PM 2.5. China however does not release this data on a regular basis, but atop the US Embassy in Beijing lays an air quality measuring device. This device will broadcast the reading through a twitter feed.

In the run-up to the Beijing Olympics, the government vowed to provide more "Blue Sky" days. A Blue Sky day is when the air pollution index was at a Grade II or below. These are nominal figures and a "Blue Sky" day might not be blue at all. The goal for the Olympics was to have two hundred and fourty-five blue sky days a year. In order to reach this goal, a license program was instituted to take cars off the street. The government also shoots pellets of silver iodide into the air when there appears to be a chance of rain.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S2 #25
Playing the China Card

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#25

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A : 想打麻将吗？
2. B : 但我们没有麻将。
3. A : 打扑克怎么样？
4. B : 好吧。我洗牌。

ENGLISH

1. A : Do you feel like playing Mahjong?
2. B : But I don't have (a set of) Mahjong.
3. A : How about playing poker?
4. B : Okay. I'll shuffle the deck.

PINYIN

1. A : Xiǎng dǎ májiàng ma?
2. B : Dàn wǒmen méiyǒu májiàng.
3. A : Dǎ pūkè zěnmeyàng?
4. B : Hǎo ba. Wǒ xǐpái.

TRADITIONAL

1. A : 想打麻將嗎？
2. B : 但我們沒有麻將。
3. A : 打撲克怎麼樣？
4. B : 好吧。我洗牌。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
麻将	麻將	májiàng	mahjong	noun
扑克	撲克	pūkè	poker	noun
游戏	遊戲	yóu xì	game	noun
赌博	賭博	dǔbó	to gamble	verb
牌	牌	pái	cards	noun
可是	可是	kěshì	but	conjunction
电脑游戏	電腦遊戲	diànnǎo yóuxì	computer games	noun
但(是)	但(是)	dàn(shì)	but	conjunction

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你会玩儿麻将吗？ *Nǐ huì wánr májiàng ma?* Can you play Mahjong?	每周三傍晚，我跟我的朋友们玩扑克。 *Měizhōu sān bàngwǎn, wǒ gēn wǒ de péngyǒumen wán pūkè.* I play poker with my friends every Wednesday evening.
周三的扑克之夜 *zhōusān de pūkè zhī yè* poker night wednesdays	打扑克 *dǎ pūkè* play poker
我们打扑克吧。 *Wǒmen dǎ pūkè ba.* How about we play poker?	昨天晚会上的游戏很有趣，大家玩得很开心。 *Zuótiān wǎnhuì shàng de yóuxì hěn yǒuqù, dàjiā wán de hěn kāixīn.* The games at the party yesterday were very interesting. We had a lot of fun.
他喜欢玩游戏。 *Tā xǐhuān wán yóuxì.* He likes to play games.	赌博不好。 *Dǔbó bù hǎo.* Gambling isn't good.
你会打牌吗？ *Nǐ huì dǎpái ma?* Do you know how to play cards?	我喜欢你，可是我不爱你。 *Wǒ xǐhuān nǐ, kěshì wǒ bù ài nǐ.* I like you, but I don't love you.
电脑游戏很有意思。 *Diànnǎo yóuxì hěn yǒuyìsi.* Computer games are very interesting.	他想来，但是太晚了。 *Tā xiǎng lái, dànshì tài wǎn le.* He wants to come, but it's too late.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 但, *dàn* ("But")
但我们没有麻将。 *Dàn wǒmen méiyǒu májiàng.*
"But I don't have (a set of) Mahjong."

但 (*dàn*), 但是 (*dànshì*), 可 (*kě*), and 可是 (*kěshì*) are all conjunctions meaning "but," and all of them can be used colloquially.

For Example:

1. 你满意，但/但是/可/可是我不满意。
   Nǐ mǎnyì, dàn /dànshì /kě /kěshì wǒ bù mǎnyì
   "You are satisfied, but I'm not."
2. 你想去，但/但是/可/可是我不想去。
   Nǐ xiǎngqù, dàn /dànshì /kě /kěshì wǒ bù xiǎngqù.
   "You want to go there, but I don't."

Usually we do not use 但 and 可in formal occasions, but instead the use of 但是 and 可是 is standard. So we can say 但是 and 可是 are formal.

For Example:

1. 但我们没有麻将台。
   Dàn wǒmen méiyǒu májiàng tái.
   "But we don't have a Mahjong table."
2. 你不累，但我累了。
   Nǐ bú lèi, dàn wǒ lèi le.
   "You're not tired, but I'm tired."
3. 你喜欢这个，但我不喜欢
   Nǐ xǐhuān zhège, dàn wǒ bù xǐhuān.
   "You like this one, but I like don't like it."
4. 他很高，但很难看。
   Tā hěn gāo, dàn hěn nánkàn.
   "He's very tall, but ugly."
5. 这个很便宜，但不好看。
   Zhège hěn piányì, dàn bù hǎo kàn.
   "This one is very cheap, but not attractive."
6. 他完成了工作，但我不满意。
   Tā wánchéng le gōngzuò, dàn wǒ bù mǎnyì.
   "He's finished his work, but I'm still not satisfied."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Mahjong in China

"Mahjong" (麻將, *má jiàng*) is the Chinese national gambling game, which normally requires four players. Mahjong involves skill, strategy, and calculation, as well as a certain degree of luck (depending on the variation played luck can be anything from a minor to a dominant factor in winning).

In the game, each player is dealt either thirteen or sixteen (in Taiwan Mahjong) tiles in a hand, depending on the variation being played. On their turn, players draw a tile and discard one with the goal of making three, four, or five melds (also depending on the variation) and one pair, or "eye." Winning comes "on the draw" by drawing a new tile or taking one that other players discard that completes the hand.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #1
Feeling sick in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
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- Vocabulary
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- Cultural insight

1

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 好久不见，你好。
2. 我不好。
3. 为什么？
4. 我头疼。

ENGLISH

1. Long time no see. How are you?
2. Not very well.
3. Why?
4. I have a headache.

PINYIN

1. Hǎojiǔbùjiàn, nǐhǎo.
2. Wǒ bù hǎo.
3. Wèishénme?
4. Wǒ tóuténg.

TRADITIONAL

1. 好久不見，你好。
2. 我不好。
3. 為甚麼？
4. 我頭疼。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
好久不见	好久不見	hǎojiǔbùjiàn	long time no see	verb phrase
疼	疼	téng	ache/sore	verb
头疼	頭疼	tóuténg	headache	noun
牙疼	牙疼	yá téng	toothache	noun phrase
嗓子疼	嗓子疼	sǎngzi téng	sore throat	noun phrase
发烧	發燒	fāshāo	to have a fever	verb phrase
拉肚子	拉肚子	lā dùzi	diarrhea	verb phrase
感冒	感冒	gǎnmào	cold	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我们好久不见了。 *Wǒmen hǎojiǔ bùjiàn le.* We haven't seen each other for a long time.	我胃疼。 *wǒ wèiténg.* I have a stomachahce.
他常常头疼。 *Tā chángcháng tóuténg.* He often has a headache.	我老牙疼。 *Wǒ lǎo yá téng.* I always have a toothache.
嗓子疼要经常喝水。 *Sǎngzi téng yào jīngcháng hē shuǐ.* You should drink water often if you have a sore throat.	你是不是发烧了？ *Nǐ shì bù shì fāshāole ?* Are you running a fever?
我昨晚拉肚子。 *Wǒ zuówǎn lādùzi.* I had diarrhea last night.	冬天要注意感冒。 *Dōngtiān yào zhùyì gǎnmào.* Be aware of catching a cold in the winter.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is How to Use 疼 and its Synonym 痛
我头疼。*Wǒ tóuténg.*
"I have a headache."

In Chinese, there are two characters that we often use to express a pain or ache when you don't feel well. In our dialogue here, we used 疼, and the other one is 痛. Although we use both in very similar contexts, there are some interesting differences between them worth knowing.

1. Northern Chinese people commonly use 疼 while 痛 is more common among people from the South-Western region. For example, 疼不疼 (téng bù téng) and 痛不痛 (tòng bù tong) can both mean, "Does it hurt?/Is it sore?" depending on personal preference.

2. We often relate 疼 to "certain physical pain and pains that we can see" such as 手上的伤口很疼 (shǒushàngde shāngkǒu hěn téng。) So if you want to complain about any physical pain you only need to put the specific body part before 疼. On the other hand, we not only can use 痛 to complain about physical pain, it is also associated with "psychological pain and emphasis on feelings and emotions." For example, 心痛 (xīntòng) here most likely is expressing a "feeling of heartbreak" rather than feeling physical pain in one's heart.

3. We use 疼 to express "sympathetic feelings" or "to take care of someone/something," while we use 痛 to express "deep sadness and sorrow toward something."

For Example:

1. 他很心疼他的车.
   Tā hěn xīnténg tā de chē.
   "He takes great care of his car."
2. 他的狗病了，他很心疼。
   Tā de gǒu bìng le, tā hěn xīnténg.
   "He was very sympathetic toward his sick dog."
3. 女朋友的离去让他很心痛。
   Nǚpéngyou de líqù ràng tā hěn xīntòng.
   "Being dumped by his girlfriend made him really sad."
4. 他的表情很痛苦
   Tā de biǎoqíng hěn tòngkǔ.
   "He looked very sad."

4. Lastly, we use 疼 more as a verb but we use 痛 more as an adjective.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Borrowing Words

When you visit China, you may often hear the Chinese using English loan words such as "Bye-bye" or "Okay," but did you know native English speakers use words and phrases borrowed from China? Some linguists think that the phrase "Long time no see" was brought into English via early Chinese migrants using Pidgin English in America when attempting to communicate with the local English speakers, as it is a literal translation of the phrase 好久不见. There are several other English phrases with unusual grammatical forms which may have the same roots including "chop, chop ," "no can do," and "where to."

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #2
Being a Chinese culinary champion

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- Dialogue - Chinese
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#2

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你会做饭吗？
2. 当然。
3. 你会做什么菜？
4. 炒鸡蛋。

ENGLISH

1. A : Can you cook?
2. B : Of course.
3. A : What dish can you cook?
4. B : Fried eggs.

PINYIN

1. Nǐ huì zuòfàn ma?
2. Dāngrán.
3. Nǐ huì zuò shénme cài?
4. Chǎo jīdàn.

TRADITIONAL

1. 你會做飯嗎？
2. 當然。
3. 你會做甚麼菜？
4. 炒雞蛋。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
做饭	做飯	zuòfàn	to cook	verb phrase
菜	菜	cài	vegetable	noun
当然	當然	dāngrán	of course	adverb
炒	炒	chǎo	to stir fry	verb
鸡蛋	雞蛋	jīdàn	egg	noun
做饭	做飯	zuòfàn	to cook food	verb
烧	燒	shāo	to burn	verb
面包	麵包	miànbāo	bread	noun
开水	開水	kāishuǐ	boiled water	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我不会做饭。 *Wǒ bù huì zuòfàn.* I can't cook.	妈妈做了很多菜。 *Māma zuò le hěn duō cài.* Mom made a lot of dishes.
当然，这是我做的。 *Dāngrán, zhè shì wǒ zuò de.* Of course, I made this.	你会炒饭吗? *Nǐ huì chǎo fàn ma?* Can you make fried rice?
他不爱吃鸡蛋。 *Tā bù ài chī jīdàn.* He doesn't like eating eggs.	你会做饭吗？ *Nǐ huì zuòfàn ma?* Can you cook food?
你会烧水吗？ *Nǐ huì shāo shuǐ ma?* Can you boil water?	切片面包 *qiēpiàn miànbāo* sliced bread
面包和水 *miànbāo hé shuǐ* bread and water	我给湖里的鸭子喂些老面包。 *Wǒ gěi hú lǐ de yāzi wèixiē lǎomiànbāo.* I feed old bread to the ducks at the lake.
黑麦面包搭配火腿和瑞士干酪是最好的。 *Hēimài miànbāo dāpèi huǒtuǐ hé ruìshì gānlào shì zuì hǎo de.* Ham and swiss cheese are best on rye bread.	黑麦面包 *hēimài miànbāo* rye bread

每个星期天早上，我们从这家面包店买面包，蛋糕和饼干。 *Měige xīngqītiān zǎoshàng, wǒmen cóng zhèjiā miànbāodiàn mǎi miànbāo, dàngāo hé bǐnggān.* Every Sunday morning we buy bread, cake, and cookies at the bakery.	切片面包和面包卷 *qiēpiàn miànbāo hé miànbāojuǎn* sliced bread and bread rolls
她不喜欢吃面包。 *Tā bù xǐhuān chī miànbāo.* She doesn't like eating bread.	中国人喜欢喝开水。 *Zhōngguó rén xǐhuān hē kāishuǐ.* Chinese people like to drink boiled water.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Common Phrase 当然 (*dāngrán*)
当然。*dāngrán*
"Of course."

当然 (*dāngrán*) is a common phrase meaning, "of course." We use it independently as a phrase or in a sentence as an adverb, such as 我当然去 (*wǒ dāngrán qù。*) When used in a negative sentence, the phrase proceeds before the negative verb 不 (*bù*), such as 当然不可以 (*dāngrán bù kěyǐ*), or 当然不行 (*dāngrán bù xíng*).

For Example:

1. 我当然能 去。
   Wǒ dāngrán néngqù
   "Of course I can go."
2. 当然会 了。
   Dāngrán huìle.
   "Of course I can."
3. 这当然是我 的。
   Zhè dāngrán shì wǒ de.
   "Of course this is mine."
4. 当然不 对。
   Dāngrán bù duì.
   "Of course it's not correct."
5. 当然不是你的 错。
   Dāngrán bù shì nǐ de cuò.
   "Of course it is not your fault."

Another common phrase that involves 当然 (*dāngrán*) is 想当然 (*xiǎng dāngrán*) meaning, "assuming things are like that or taking things for granted."

For Example:

1. 他总是想当然。
   Tā zǒngshì xiǎng dāngrán.
   "He always takes things for granted."

2. 别想当然 了。
   Biéxiǎngdāngrán le.
   "Stop assuming things happen just like that."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Food in China

While Chinese food is very popular all over the world, there are certain Chinese dishes that have never really caught on in the West. Chicken's feet, cow's stomach, and rabbit's head are all popular foods in China, which many foreigners would think twice before trying. At the same time, those who have tried famously unusual dishes such as the decidedly environmentally unfriendly shark's fin soup or bird's nest soup, remain perplexed as to the prestige that is held given the foods' bland and unremarkable taste. One explanation for this could be that the Chinese recognize texture as being as important as flavor in the dishes they eat. Consider the pleasure many Chinese take in sucking the last remaining meat from a chicken's foot or slurping squidgy tofu with crunchy beans. In some spicy Sichuan hotpot, where the chilli peppers overpower any individual food flavors, the only way to distinguish the different ingredients is by their texture. In fact, there is a specific phrase to describe the sensation of food in the mouth, *kou gan*, which literally means, "mouth feeling." So the next time you are offered some unusual Chinese dishes, try to concentrate on the sensation the food is giving your mouth instead of the tastes on your tongue.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #3
Clock-watching in China

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#3

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 现在几点了？
2. 十点半。
3. 什么？我晚了。
4. 我也晚了。

ENGLISH

1. What time is it now?
2. Half past ten.
3. What? I am late.
4. I am late too.

PINYIN

1. Xiànzài jǐdiǎnle?
2. Shí diǎn bàn.
3. Shénme? Wǒ wǎn le.
4. Wǒ yě wǎn le.

TRADITIONAL

1. 現在幾點了？
2. 十點半。
3. 甚麼？我晚了。
4. 我也晚了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
现在	現在	xiànzài	now	adverb
几点	幾點	jǐdiǎn	what time is it	noun phrase
半	半	bàn	half	noun
一刻	一刻	yī kè	a quarter	noun
分	分	fēn	minute	noun
秒	秒	miǎo	second	noun
早	早	zǎo	early	adjective
晚	晚	wǎn	late	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我现在住在伦敦。 *Wǒ xiànzài zhù zài Lúndūn.* I live in London now.	你几点上班？ *Nǐ jǐ diǎn shàngbān?* What time do you go to work?
现在两点半。 *Xiànzài liǎng diǎn bàn.* It is now half past two.	现在是九点一刻。 *Xiànzài shì jiǔ diǎn yī kè.* It is now a quarter past nine.
十分钟够吗？ *Shí fēnzhōng gòu ma?* Will ten minutes be enough?	只要一秒钟 *zhǐyào yī miǎo zhōng* just a second
有十秒钟 *yǒu shí miǎo zhōng* for ten seconds	跑表上还剩五十八秒。 *Pǎobiǎo shàng hái shèng wǔshí bā miǎo.* There are fifty eight seconds left on the stopwatch.
我需要三十秒。 *Wǒ xūyào sānshí miǎo.* I need 30 seconds.	他每天起床很早。 *Tā měi tiān qǐchuáng hěn zǎo.* He gets up early every day.
晚了一小时 *wǎnle yì xiǎoshí* an hour late	客户会议上迟到了。 *Kèhù huìyì shàng chídào le.* The client is late for the meeting.
晚了一个会议 *wǎnle yí gè huìyì* late for a meeting	改掉我的坏习惯已经太晚了。 *Gǎidiào wǒ de huài xíguàn yǐjīng tài wǎn le.* It was too late for me to change my bad habits.

现在后悔已经晚了。 *Xiànzài hòuhuǐ yǐjīng wǎn le.* It's too late to regret now.	他天天睡得很晚。 *Tā tiāntiān shuìde hěn wǎn.* He goes to bed late every day.
我昨天下班很晚。 *Wǒ zuótiān xiàbān hěn wǎn.* Yesterday, I got off work very late.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Noun (noun phrase) / Adjective (adjective phrase) + 了
我晚了。*Wǒ wǎn le.*
"I am late."

了 (*le*) is a very versatile yet confusing word in terms of Chinese grammar. Today, we introduce one of the most common functions of 了(*le*).
We usually put 了(*le*) at the end of the sentence. When it is after an adjective or adjective phrase, it usually indicates that a change has happened and a new situation has come into being. And the adjective or adjective phrase is the description of this situation. In our dialogue, the sentence 我晚了 (*wǒwǎnle*) indicates the speaker's situation has changed to become late for something while he wasn't before。

For Example:

1. 这双鞋小 了。
   Zhè shuāng xié xiǎo le.
   "This pair of shoes became small."
2. 天热 了。
   Tiān rèle.
   "The weather is getting hot."
3. 你瘦 了。
   Nǐ shòule.
   "You've lost weight." (You became thinner.)
4. 这裤子短 了。
   Zhè kùzi duǎn le.
   "This pair of trousers became short."

When 了 (*le*) is after a noun or noun phrase, it also carries a meaning that things have already become or changed into something, such as in our dialogue, 现在几点了(*xiànzài jǐdiǎnle*). Because the time word 现在 (*xiànzài*) gives a time point, with or without 了 (*le*) in the sentence doesn't really change the meaning of the question. However, if the question is 几点了 (*jǐdiǎnle*), 了 (*le*) here is indicating what time it has changed to as the speaker asks. If you ask 几点 (*jǐdiǎn*) without 了 (*le*), the sentence would be incomplete and the meaning becomes unclear.

For Example:

1. 冬天了，天冷 了。
   Dōngtiān le, tiān lěng le.
   "Winter has come, it's getting cold."

2. 大姑娘了，该找男朋友了。
   Dà gūniáng le, gāi zhǎo nánpéngyou le.
   "(You are) already a big girl now, it's time to find a boyfriend."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

China's Time Zone

The most easterly point in China is Fuyuan County, Heilongjiang Province, which lies to the east of both Koreas and the Russian port of Vladivistock, and is directly north of Osaka in Japan. Nearly five thousand kilometers to the west lies the city of Kashgar in Xinjiang Province, close to the borders with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Surprisingly, when it is 9AM and the sun has been up for several hours in Fuyuan, it is also 9AM in Kashgar, though the sun may not rise for another hour. This is because China is the world's largest country to exist as one single time zone. This is known as China Standard Time, or Beijing Time, and is GMT +8. This is the official time though unofficially some Xinjiang residents do use their own time keeping system, which can be confusing if you ever travel there. This wasn't always the case as between the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and the Communist revolution in 1949, China operated on five distinct time zones.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #4
Bag a Chinese bargain

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#4

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 这个多少钱？
2. 这个一百块钱。
3. 一百？太贵了。五块怎么样？
4. 神经病！

ENGLISH

1. A : How much is this?
2. B : It is one hundred Yuan.
3. A : One hundred? Too expensive. How about five Yuan?
4. B : Are you crazy?

PINYIN

1. Zhège duō shǎo qián ?
2. Zhège yībǎi kuài qián.
3. Yībǎi ? Tài guì le. Wǔ kuài zěnmeyàng?
4. Shénjīngbìng!

TRADITIONAL

1. 這個多少錢？
2. 這個一百塊錢。
3. 一百？太貴了。五塊怎麼樣？
4. 神經病！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
神经病	神經病	shénjīngbìng	mentally ill	noun
疯了	瘋了	fēng le	crazy	adjective
贵	貴	guì	expensive	adjective
便宜	便宜	piányi	inexpensive	adjective
钱	錢	qián	money	noun
砍价	砍價	kǎn jià	to bargain	verb phrase
打折	打折	dǎzhé	to have a discount	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

别理他，他神经病。 *Bié lǐ tā, tā shénjīngbìng.* Leave him alone, he is crazy.	他是不是疯了？ *Tā shì bù shì fēng le ?* Is he crazy?
他的车很贵。 *Tā de chē hěn guì.* His car is very expensive.	我买了个便宜的电脑。 *Wǒ mǎi le ge piányi de diànnǎo.* I bought a cheap computer.
他很有钱。 *Tā hěn yǒu qián.* He's got a lot of money.	可以砍价吗？ *Kěyǐ kǎnjià ma?* Can I bargain?
他常买打折的衣服。 *Tā cháng mǎi dǎzhé de yīfu.* He often buys discounted clothes.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Usage of 太...了 *(tài ...le)*
太贵了 Tài guì le
"Too expensive"

Today we continue on with the last lesson's grammar point. We are introducing another usage of 了. If you still remember from last lesson, 了 after an adjective or noun indicates that a certain change has taken place. Here, when 了 is combined with the degree adverb 太 tài or 最 zuì to form 太...了 tài ...le or 最...了zuì ...le where the adjective goes in the middle, it does not indicate the situation has changed, but confirms and emphasizes that a certain situation is existing. Such as in our dialogue, 太贵了tài guì le emphasizes something is "too expensive," but doesn't indicate that the price has changed from inexpensive to very expensive. If the speaker wanted to indicate the change of state, the sentence can simply be 这个贵了zhège guì le.

For Example:

1. 外面太亮了。
   Wàimian tài liàng le.
   "It's too bright outside."
2. 他的衣服太脏了。
   Tā de yīfu tài zāng le.
   "His clothes are too dirty."
3. 水太凉了。
   Shuǐ tài liáng le.
   "The water is too cold."
4. 他最可爱了。
   Tā zuì kěài le.
   "He is the cutest."
5. 他最讨厌了。
   Tā zuì tǎoyàn le.
   "He is most annoying."
6. 我男朋友最帅了。
   Wǒ nánpéngyou zuì shuài le.
   "My boyfriend is the most handsome guy."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Bargaining is an essential part of the Chinese shopping experience. Clothes, food, electronic equiptment, hotel rooms can all be bargained for. It can even be possible in some of the big western style shopping malls that are becoming increasingly ubiqiutous in the big cities. Many foreigners worry that they will be ripped off in the bargaining process so here are a few tips to improve your bargaining skills: 1. Use some Chinese. Even if it is as simple as saying the price in Chinese or calling the shopkeeper 'pengyou' (friend) it can all help to knock a few kuai off the price. 2. Don't be scared of starting off low. Low means between a quarter or a third of the asking price not half the price. 3. Practise on inexpensive items before going onto more expensive items where you may lose more maoney. 4. Decide yourself what you are willing to pay and be aware that most 'antiques' are nothing of the sort so are only worth what you are willing to spend. 5. Don't be afraid to walk away or compare different shops. Never buy from the first shop you see.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #5
Have a happy birthday in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#5

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 祝你生日快乐。
2. 谢谢。
3. 你几岁了？
4. 三十了。
5. 你老了。

ENGLISH

1. Happy birthday to you.
2. Thank you.
3. How old are you?
4. Thirty.
5. You are old.

PINYIN

1. Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè.
2. Xièxie.
3. Nǐ jǐ suì le?
4. Sānshí le.
5. Nǐ lǎo le.

TRADITIONAL

1. 祝你生日快樂。
2. 謝謝。
3. 你幾歲了？
4. 三十了。
5. 你老了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
祝你	祝你	zhù nǐ	to wish you	verb phrase
生日	生日	shēngrì	birthday	noun
快乐	快樂	kuàilè	happy	adjective
几岁	幾歲	jǐ suì	how old	question pronoun
多大	多大	duō dà	how old	question pronoun
老	老	lǎo	old	adjective
年轻	年輕	niánqīng	young	adjective
生日礼物	生日禮物	shēngrì lǐwù	birthday present	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

祝你生日快乐。 *Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè.* Happy birthday to you.	你生日是什么时候？ *Nǐ shēngrì shì shénme shíhou?* When is your birthday?
祝你天天快乐。 *Zhù nǐ tiāntiān kuàilè.* May you be happy everyday.	你几岁了？ *Nǐ jǐ suì le?* How old are you ? (asking kids)
那个孩子几岁了？ *Nàge háizi jǐ suì le?* How old is that kid?	你多大了？ *Nǐ duō dà le?* How old are you? (asking kids or adults)
他又老了一岁。 *Tā yòu lǎo le yī suì.* He is one year older.	他很年轻。 *Tā hěn niánqīng.* He is very young.
这是你的生日礼物。 *Zhè shì nǐ de shēngrì lǐwù.* This is your birthday present.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 祝你...*zhù nǐ*...("Phrases")
祝你生日快乐。*Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè.*
"Happy birthday to you."

In Chinese, we have many fixed expressions starting with 祝你zhù nǐ that we frequently use in various situations. 祝你zhù nǐ literally means, "to wish you..." in English. Today we are going to devote the whole grammar section to introduce a few of these common expressions that may help you to start a smooth conversation with locals. In fact, once you get more fluent with your Chinese, you can sometimes drop 祝你zhù nǐ from the beginning. Or if the person to be congratulated is a well-respected person, you should change 你nǐ to 您nín, a more polite form of "you."

For Example:

1. 祝你一路平安。
   Zhù nǐ yílùpíngān.
   "Wish you a safe trip."
2. 祝你新年快乐。
   Zhù nǐ xīnnián kuàilè.
   "Wish you a happy new year."
3. 祝你圣诞快乐。
   Zhù nǐ shèngdàn kuàilè.
   "Wish you a happy Christmas."
4. 祝你身体健康。
   Zhù nǐ shēntǐ jiànkāng.
   "Wish you good health."
5. 祝你万事如意。
   Zhù nǐ wàn shì rúyì.
   "Everything goes as you wished."
6. 祝你梦想成真。
   Zhù nǐ mèngxiǎngchéngzhēn.
   "Wish all your dreams come true."
7. 祝你工作顺利。
   Zhù nǐ gōngzuò shùnlì.
   "Hope things go smoothly with your job."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Important Chinese Birthdays

The western tradition of celebrating individual birthdays is one of many cultural imports that are taking hold in China with cream-covered birthday cakes and candles readily available in bakeries around the cities, present giving, and birthday meals, and the more eastern birthday celebrations of singing together in a KTV karaoke room. However, it is not entirely true to say birthdays are a western import. Traditionally, the birthdays of young children and the elderly were very important for the Chinese. On their first birthday, children were placed in the center of a group of objects and the child would be encouraged to grab an object to determine their future career prospects. So for example, if the baby were to pick up a coin it might become rich. If it reached for a book, it might become a teacher, or if it reached for a doll, it might have many children. Babies were also given hats or shoes decorated with pictures of tigers as tigers were said to protect children. The sixtieth birthday is a very important date for adults as it represents the end of one life cycle and the beginning of the next. This is often celebrated with children and grandchildren offering symbolic foods to their parents such as noodles representing long life, eggs, or artificial wheat-filled peaches.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #6
A Chinese case of mistaken identity

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#6

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你在看谁？
2. 我谁也没看。
3. 骗人！你在看美女！
4. 我...我在看你。

ENGLISH

1. A : Who are you staring at?
2. B : I am not staring at anyone.
3. A : Liar! You are staring at pretty girls!
4. B : I...I am looking at you.

PINYIN

1. Nǐ zài kàn shéi?
2. Wǒ shéi yě méi kàn.
3. Piànrén! Nǐ zài kàn měinǚ!
4. Wǒ ...Wǒ zài kàn nǐ.

TRADITIONAL

1. 你在看誰？
2. 我誰也沒看。
3. 騙人！你在看美女！
4. 我...我在看你。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
看	看	kàn	to look at	verb
骗人	騙人	piànrén	to cheat someone	verb
美女	美女	měinǚ	pretty girl	noun
帅哥	帥哥	shuàigē	handsome guy	noun
大妈	大媽	dàmā	old woman	noun
大爷	大爺	dàye	old man	noun
胡说	胡說	húshuō	talking nonsense	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

快看那个！ *Kuài kàn nàge!* Look at that!	看，谁来了。 *Kàn, shéi lái le.* Look who is here.
你为什么骗人？ *Nǐ wèishénme piàn rén?* Why are you lying?	那儿有很多美女。 *Nàr yǒu hěn duō měinǚ.* There are many pretty girls there.
他真是个大帅哥。 *Tā zhēnshì ge dà shuàigē.* He really is a handsome guy.	去问问那位大妈。 *Qù wènwen nà wèi dàmā.* Go and ask that old lady.
大爷是那个美女的爸爸。 *Dàye shì nàge měinǚ de bàba.* This old man is that pretty girl's dad.	不要胡说！ *Bùyào húshuō!* Stop talking nonsense!

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Question Pronoun 谁 (*shéi*)
我谁也没看。*Wǒ shéi yě méi kàn.*
"I am not looking at anyone."

Even at the absolute beginner level, most of you would already be very familiar with the character 谁 (*shéi*。) 谁 (*shéi*) means, "who," as in the sentence 他是谁？ (*tā shì shéi?*) However, today in our dialogue, we need to treat the 谁 (*shéi*) sentence differently. Although it is a question pronoun, here 我谁也没看 (*wǒ shéi yě méi kàn*) is not a question and it does not require an answer. Therefore, 谁 (*shéi*) here refers to anyone in general. When it carries this meaning, we often follow 谁 (*shéi*) by the adverb 也 or 都 to emphasize. Note also when 谁 (*shéi*) means "who" in a true question sentence, it is usually at the end of the sentence. While it refers to "anyone in general" in a non-question sentence, it often appears at the front of the sentence before the verb.

For Example:

1. 他谁都不喜欢。
   Tā shéi dōu bù xǐhuān.
   "He doesn't like anyone."
2. 我谁也不爱。
   Wǒ shéi yě bù ài.
   "I don't love anyone."
3. 谁都可以来。
   Shéi dōu kěyǐ lái.
   "Anyone can come."
4. 谁都能吃。
   Shéi dōu néngchī.
   "Anyone can eat."

There are some other question pronouns that most of you already know how to use to ask questions such as 什么 or 哪儿 (*nǎr*)、It's just like 谁 having two meanings, 什么, and 哪儿 (*nǎr*), which can also refer to "anything" and "anywhere" in general and used in a non-question sentence.

For Example:

1. 他什么都吃。
   Tā shénme dū chī.
   "He eats anything."
2. 我什么也没说。
   Wǒ shénme yě méi shuō.
   "I didn't say anything."
3. 他哪儿都去过。
   Tā nǎr dōu qù guo.
   "He has been to everywhere."
4. 去哪儿都行。
   Qù nǎr dōu xíng.
   "I can go anywhere."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Attractions

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is a common phrase in the west and is echoed by the Chinese idiom *qíng rén yǎn lǐ chū xī*, meaning, "You are always a beauty in your lover's eyes." However, the standards for beauty have varied greatly over the years. When written, that idiom has a reference to the four great beauties of Chinese history. Of these four legendarily beautiful women, it is said that, "Xi Shi sinks fish, Wang Zhaojun drops birds, Diao Chan closes the moon, and Yang Guifei shames flowers with their beauty." These beauties most likely pre-date the introduction of the horrific practice of foot binding which disfigured the feet of Chinese women for generations to please men's predilection for small feet. Foot binding began to disappear after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 but some elderly women still showed signs of foot binding even into the twenty-first century.

In the 1920s and 30s the western-influenced *modeng xiaojie* ("modern miss") appeared as a new standard for beauty especially in the thriving metropolis of Shanghai. These bobbed-hair heavily made-up beauties were often seen in advertising for cosmetics and tobacco products. These images disappeared in the aftermath of the communist revolution to be replaced by female comrades working together to build a new China. High fashion, make-up, and tightly fitting clothes were replaced by short hair and simple, baggy worker clothes. Women who ignored the utilitarian tastes of the day could actually be punished for wearing lipstick or eyeliner. In twenty-first century China, fashion is back with a vengence with millions of RMB spent on the latest cosmetic fashions and increasingly, cosmetic surgery. Height is considered especially important for women and many job advertisements set height requirements for applicants. Also, the idea of beauty for Asian women varies a lot between the east and west with the Chinese showing a preference for large eyes, a small nose, and petite frame as opposed to small eyes, large lips, freckles, a flat nose, and high cheek bones. This criteria of beauty leaves many Chinese perplexed by the popularity of models such as Lu Yan or actresses such as Lucy Liu in the west. Unfortunately, all these examples refer only to female beauty. Perhaps we need an extra post to look at what is considered attractive in a man.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #7
Planning a fun night in China?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

7

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你想去哪儿？
2. 三里屯。
3. 人太多，不好走。
4. 那酒吧街呢?
5. 更不好走！

ENGLISH

1. A : Where do you want to go?
2. B : Sanlitun.
3. A : Too many people, difficult to get to.
4. B : What about the bar street then?
5. A : Even more difficult to get to.

PINYIN

1. Nǐ xiǎng qù nǎr?
2. Sānlǐtún.
3. Rén tài duō, bù hǎo zǒu.
4. Nà jiǔbā jiē ne?
5. Gèngbù hǎo zǒu!

TRADITIONAL

1. 你想去哪兒？
2. 三裏屯。
3. 人太多，不好走。
4. 那酒吧街呢?
5. 更不好走！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
想	想	xiǎng	to want to	verb
三里屯	三里屯	sānlǐtún	Sanlitun	noun
不好走	不好走	bù hǎo zǒu	hard to get to	adjective phrase
酒吧	酒吧	jiǔbā	bar	noun
酒吧街	酒吧街	jiǔbā jiē	bar street	noun
更	更	gèng	even more	adverb
电影院	電影院	diànyǐngyuàn	movie theater	noun
网吧	網吧	wǎngbā	internet cafe	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我想回家。

Wǒ xiǎng huíjiā.

I want to go home.

我想要两张。

Wǒ xiǎng yào liǎng zhāng.

I want two copies.

三里屯有很多酒吧。

Sānlǐtún yǒu hěn duō jiǔbā.

There are a lot of bars in Sanlitun.

那儿车太多，不太好走。

Nàr chē tài duō, bù tài hǎozǒu.

There is too much traffic there, so it's hard to get through.

这个酒吧人不多。

Zhège jiǔbā rén bù duō.

There are not many people in this bar.

三里屯的酒吧街很热闹。

Sānlǐtún de jiǔbā jiē hěn rènao.

The bar street in Sanlitun is very busy.

这个更不好用。

Zhège gèng bù hǎo yòng.

This is even more difficult to use.

电影院在哪儿？

Diànyǐngyuàn zài nǎr?

Where is the cinema?

网吧在酒吧后面。

Wǎngbā zài jiǔbā hòumian.

The internet cafe is behind the bar.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Pattern 不 + 好 + Verb (*bù +hǎo+verb*)
人太多，不好走。
Rén tài duō, bù hǎo zǒu.
"Too many people, difficult to get to."

Today we introduce a very useful pattern, which can turn simple verbs into adjectives. Take the one from our dialogue as an example, 人太多，不好走(rén tài duō, bù hǎo zǒu)。Here, 走zǒu is a verb meaning, "to walk." If we add 好hǎo in front, 好走(hǎo zǒu) then turns into an adjective meaning, "easy to get around." When we use this pattern in a sentence we often add degree adverbs such as 真zhēn or 很hěn before the pattern 好 + verb so that the sentence sounds more natural.

For Example:

1. 这个苹果真好吃。
   Zhège píngguǒ zhēn hǎochī.
   "This apple is really tasty."
2. 那个女孩儿真好看。
   Nà ge nǚháir zhēn hǎokàn.
   "That girl is really pretty."
3. 这首歌很好听。
   Zhè shǒu gē hěn hǎotīng.
   "This song is very nice."
4. 你的电脑真好用。
   Nǐ de diànnǎo zhēn hǎoyòng.
   "Your computer is really easy to use."

If you then add 不bù in front of 好走(hǎo zǒu), 不好走(bù hǎo zǒu) became a negative form of that adjective, meaning, "not easy (difficult) to get around." This is a fixed pattern that we can apply to many action verbs such as 做zuò，吃chī，喝hē，看kàn，听tīng，用yòng , etc. We constantly use them in spoken language.

For Example:

1. 这杯酒不好喝。
   Zhè bēi jiǔ bù hǎo hē.
   "This glass of wine tastes bad."
2. 那个游戏不好玩儿。
   Nà ge yóuxì bù hǎo wán er.
   "That game is not fun."
3. 这个菜不好做。
   Zhège cài bù hǎo zuò.
   "This dish is not easy to make."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Partying it up in China

Partying in China has become an increasingly common activity for more affluent Chinese people and the many ex-pats to be found in cities around China. This has led to a huge growth in bars and nightclubs. The Sanlitun area in Beijing, close to many of the foreign embassies, has had a bar scene for over a decade now but similar areas have spread across the city and the country. While the usual combination of loud music, bright lights, cigarette smoke, and alcohol are found in bars throughout the world, there are a few Chinese characteristics that stand out. It is very common for large groups of young Chinese people to play drinking games in bars, especially a "dice game" called *Shaizi.* "Chinese wine" (*Baijiu*) is more of a restaurant drink so in bars and clubs you are more likely to see beer or a cocktail of green tea and scotch whiskey (almost always the Chivas Regal brand). The drinking games can get very competetitive so watch out if you are not used to drinking to excess. There are almost always snacks such as popcorn and cut fruit available and many clubs also feature karaoke rooms for private parties.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #8
Being polite helps in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
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#8

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 唷,对不起!
2. 哎哟，疼死了。
3. 真不好意思。
4. 算了算了。

ENGLISH

1. A : Oh, I am sorry.
2. B : Ouch, it really hurts.
3. A : I am really sorry.
4. B : Forget it, forget it.

PINYIN

1. Yō ,duìbuqǐ!
2. āiyo, téngsǐ le.
3. Zhēn bùhǎoyìsi.
4. Suànlesuànle.

TRADITIONAL

1. 唷,對不起!
2. 哎喲，疼死了。
3. 真不好意思。
4. 算了算了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
不好意思	不好意思	bùhǎoyìsi	excuse me	phrase
算了	算了	suànle	forget it	others
对不起	對不起	duìbuqǐ	I'm sorry	phrase
麻烦您了	麻煩您了	máfan nín le	sorry to trouble you	others
甭客气	甭客氣	béng kèqi	you are welcome	others
劳驾	勞駕	láojià	excuse me	others
道歉	道歉	dàoqiàn	to apologize	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

哦，不好意思，请坐。 *O, bùhǎo yìsi, qǐng zuò.* Oh, sorry, please sit.	不好意思我不能来了，你们玩得开心哦! *Bùhǎo yìsi wǒ bù néng lái le, nǐmen wán de kāixīn o!* Sorry I can't make it, you guys have fun!
不好意思，我过一下。 *Bùhǎo yìsi, wǒ guò yīxià.* Excuse me, let me through.	算了，就这样吧。 *Suàn le, jiù zhèyàng ba.* Forget it. Leave it like this.
对不起，我迟到了。 *Duìbuqǐ, wǒ chídào le.* I'm sorry that I'm late.	对不起，我错了。 *Duìbuqǐ, wǒ cuò le.* I'm sorry. I made a mistake.
麻烦您了，帮个忙。 *Máfan nín le, bāng ge máng.* Sorry to trouble you, please give me a hand.	甭客气，您慢走。 *Béng kèqi, nín mànzǒu.* You are welcome, walk slowly.
劳驾，我问个路。 *Láojià, wǒ wèn ge lù.* Excuse me, I need to ask for directions.	错了就道歉。 *Cuò le jiù dàoqiàn.* If you are wrong, apologize.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is ...死了 (*...sǐ le*) and ...坏了 (*...huài le*)
疼死了。
Téngsǐ le.
"It's so painful."

Chinese is a very vivid language. When we want to emphasize our feelings or emotions, we often add 死了 (*sǐle*) after the adjectives or verbs, which literally means, "to have died." Some of you might already be familiar with this pattern since we commonly use it in spoken language. In our dialogue, the sentence 疼死了 (*téngsǐle*) is not a complete sentence in terms of grammar for the lack of subject 我 (*wǒ*). However, this is often the case in spoken language. Or, you also might hear people say, X死我了 (*sǐwǒle*).

For Example:

1. 困死我了。
   Kūn sǐ wǒ le.
   "I am so sleepy."
2. 他高兴死了。
   Tā gāoxìng sǐ le.
   "He is so happy."
3. 臭死了。
   Chòu sǐ le.
   "It's so smelly."
4. 他笨死了。
   Tā bèn sǐ le.
   "He is so dumb."

Sometimes in positive narrative sentences in which 我 (*wǒ*) is the subject, instead of ...死了 (*sǐle*), we use ...坏了 (*huàile*) . However, in negative and question sentences, ...坏了 (*huàile*) is preferred over ...死了 (*sǐle*).

For Example:

1. 你别累坏了。
   Nǐ bié lèi huài le.
   "Don't exhaust yourself."
2. 你饿坏了吧？
   Nǐ è huài le ba?
   "You must be really hungry."
3. 你热坏了吧？
   Nǐ rè huài le ba?
   "You must be so hot."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Being Polite in China

In traditional Chinese culture, politeness is extremely important in all forms of social interaction. Much of the prevailing social system was based upon the Chinese philosopher Confucius' principles of order and respect, especially towards family members and ones' elders. As well as showing respect and esteem for others, it was also important to show humility and self-depreciation. There are many honorific terms used to refer to other family members, important people, elders, and others. However, many of these terms have fallen out of use in the last hundred years or so as a result of modernization and the political upheavals of the twentieth century. Similarly, the once common practice of bowing, or *kowtowing*, also based on Confucian principles, is very rare in modern Chinese life. However, politeness is still an important part of Chinese life. Be aware, however, that many Chinese find the common western habit (particularly amongst the British) of saying sorry for very minor incidents quite alien. Don't be surprised to hear no apology when you bump into someone while on the subway or bus. Much of the politeness in China is concerned with the complicated process of "saving face" for both parties.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #9

You've got a lot to complain about in Chinese

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#9

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 我热死了。
2. 我也是。
3. 我累死了。
4. 快到了。
5. 我渴死了。
6. 你烦死了。

ENGLISH

1. A : I am so hot.
2. B : Me too.
3. A : I am so tired.
4. B : We'll be there soon.
5. A : I am so thirsty.
6. B : You are so annoying.

PINYIN

1. Wǒ rè sǐ le.
2. Wǒ yě shì.
3. Wǒ lèi sǐ le.
4. Kuài dào le.
5. Wǒ kě sǐ le.
6. Nǐ fán sǐ le.

TRADITIONAL

1. 我熱死了。
2. 我也是。
3. 我累死了。
4. 快到了。
5. 我渴死了。
6. 你煩死了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
热	熱	rè	hot	adjective
冷	冷	lěng	cold	adjective
累	累	lèi	tired	adjective
渴	渴	kě	thirsty	adjective
饿	餓	è	hungry	adjective
快	快	kuài	fast	adjective
慢	慢	màn	slow	adjective
到	到	dào	to arrive	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

今天真热。 *Jīntiān zhēn rè.* It's really hot today.	北京的冬天很冷。 *Běijīng de dōngtiān hěn lěng.* Winter in Beijing is very cold.
我工作了一天，很累。 *Wǒ gōngzuò le yìtiān, hěn lèi.* I've worked for a whole day, and I'm tired.	他每天都很累。 *Tā měi tiān dōu hěn lèi.* He is tired everyday.
我经常口渴。 *Wǒ jīngcháng kǒukě.* I often feel thirsty.	你饿不饿? *Nǐ è bu è ?* Are you hungry?

快点儿，跟上。 *Kuài diǎnr, gēn shàng.* A little bit faster, catch up.	你太慢了。 *Nǐ tài màn le.* You are too slow.

终于到家了。 *Zhōngyú dào jiā le.* We've finally arrived home.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Adjectives Used as Verbs in a Sentence
我热死了。
Wǒ rè sǐ le.
"I am so hot."

There are situations whereby in a Chinese sentence there is no actual verb required. Today we are going to talk about two situations that beging learners should pay attention to:

- Usually, an adverb of degree such as 很, 真, or 太 would describe the adjective verb and it is wrong to have 是 in the same sentence.
- If there are no degree adverbs, there must be a 了 at the end of the sentence to form the adjective + 了 pattern, which indicates that certain changes have taken place as the speaker speaks. In this case, there is no actual verb required.

For Example:

1. 今天真热。
   Jīntiān zhēn rè.
   "Today is so hot."
2. 这鞋太大。
   Zhè xié tàidà.
   "This pair of shoes is too big."
3. 那个厕所很脏。
   Nàge cèsuǒ hěn zāng.
   "That toilet is very dirty."
4. 他的脸红了。
   Tā de liǎnhóngle.
   "His face turned red."
5. 这本书旧了。
   Zhè běn shū jiù le.
   "This book is getting old."
6. 妈妈老了。
   Māma lǎo le.
   "Mom is getting old."

However, these rules generally do not apply to negative sentences. For the adverb + adjective type sentences, 不 replaces the adverbs to turn the sentence into its negative form. To turn an adjective + 了 sentence negative, we add 没 before the adjective and get rid of 了 at the same time.

For Example:

1. 今天不热。
   Jīntiān bù rè.
   "Today is not hot."
2. 这鞋不大。
   Zhè xié bùdà.
   "This pair of shoes is not big."
3. 那个厕所没脏。
   Nà ge cèsuǒ méi zāng.
   "That toilet did not get dirty."
4. 他的脸没红。
   Tā de liǎn méi hóng.
   "His face didn't turn red."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

China's Lucky and Not-So-Lucky Number

This dialogue shows the importance of using the correct tones when speaking. Say *si* in the third tone and you'll mean "death" or "dying," whereas *si* in the fourth tone means the number "four." The similarity in the sounds has lead to the Chinese viewing the number four as the unluckiest number (similar to how the number thirteen is viewed in the west). Many Chinese buildings don't have a fourth floor and hotels don't have room numbers containing number four. Not just that but some Chinese are so superstitious that they have no number thirteen, fourteen, or twenty-four. Number "eight" (*ba*) sounds like making a "fortune" (*fa*) so eight is often used for good luck in phone numbers, car number plates, and many other areas. Consequently, anything containing the number eight is more expensive than other numbers.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #10
Too many Chinese culinary choices

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#10

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 我想吃烧烤。
2. 没问题。
3. 不，我想吃烤鸭。
4. 好吧。
5. 不不，我想吃西餐。
6. 你到底想吃什么?

ENGLISH

1. A : I want to have barbecue.
2. B : No problem.
3. A : No, I want to have roast duck.
4. B : Alright.
5. A : No, I want to have western food.
6. B : What on earth do you want to eat?

PINYIN

1. Wǒ xiǎng chī shāokǎo.
2. Méiwèntí.
3. Bù, wǒ xiǎng chī kǎoyā.
4. Hǎo ba.
5. Bù bù, wǒ xiǎng chī xīcān.
6. Nǐ dàodǐ xiǎng chī shénme?

TRADITIONAL

1. 我想吃燒烤。
2. 沒問題。
3. 不，我想吃烤鴨。
4. 好吧。
5. 不不，我想吃西餐。
6. 你到底想吃甚麼?

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
没问题	沒問題	méiwèntí	no problem	expression
烤鸭	烤鴨	kǎoyā	roast duck	noun
中餐	中餐	zhōngcān	Chinese food	noun
西餐	西餐	xīcān	western food	noun
到底	到底	dàodǐ	on earth, actually, really	adverb
火锅	火鍋	huǒguō	hot pot	noun
快餐	快餐	kuàicān	fast food	noun
烧烤	燒烤	shāokǎo	barbecue	none

SAMPLE SENTENCES

没问题，我一定去。 *Méiwèntí, wǒ yīdìng qù.* No problem, I'll definitely go.	你放心吧，没问题。 *Nǐ fàngxīn ba, méi wèntí.* You should relax. No problem.
烤鸭真好吃。 *Kǎoyā zhēn hǎochī.* The roast duck is really tasty.	我喜欢吃中餐。 *Wǒ xǐhuān chī zhōngcān.* I like to eat Chinese food.
这里的西餐太贵了。 *Zhèlǐ de xīcān tài guì le.* The western food here is too expensive.	你到底去不去？ *Nǐ dàodǐ qù bu qù?* Are you really going or not?

四川火锅很辣。	一份快餐多少钱？
Sìchuān huǒguō hěn là.	*Yī fèn kuàicān duōshǎo qián?*
Sichuan hotpot is very spicy.	How much for one order of fast food?

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 到底 (*dàodǐ*)
你到底想吃什么?
Nǐ dàodǐ xiǎng chī shénme?
"What on earth do you want to eat?"

Adverb is an important category in the Chinese language. One of the main functions for adverbs is to put emphasis on the sentence. Today we are introducing the adverb 到底 (*dàodǐ*) which precisely functions to emphasize the speaker's tone when we ask questions. In our dialogue, 你到底想吃什么 (*Nǐ dàodǐ xiǎng chī shénme*) carries a much stronger nuance than 你想吃什么 (*Nǐ xiǎng chī shénme*), although the questions being asked are essentially the same. This emphasis we can roughly translate into English as "...on earth," or "straight to the point..."

For Example:

1. 你到底去不去？
   Nǐ dàodǐ qù bu qù?
   "Straight to the point are you going or not?"
2. 他到底来不来？
   Tā dàodǐ lái bu lái?
   "Straight to the point is he coming or not?"
3. 他到底行不行？
   Tā dàodǐ xíng buxíng?
   "Straight to the point can he do it or not?"
4. 你到底怎么了？
   Nǐ dàodǐ zěnme le ?
   "What on earth is the matter with you?"
5. 他到底说了什么？
   Tā dàodǐ shuō le shénme?
   "What on earth did he say?"

Apart from appearing in question sentences to emphasize the speaker's tone, we can also use 到底in narrative sentences meaning, "after all." Take a look at the following sentences.

For Example:

1. 她到底还是来了。
   Tā dàodǐ hái shìlái le.
   "After all she came."
2. 他到底是个孩子。
   Tā dàodǐ shì ge háizi.

"After all he is still a child."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Old and New Chinese Restaurants

Restaurants have a history stretching back over a thousand years in China to be in the cities of Kaifeng and Hangzhou before the Mongol invasions in the 13th century. One account from Hangzhou in 1275 tells us, "The people of Hangzhou are difficult to please. Hundreds of orders are given on all sides: this person wants something hot, another something cold, a third something tepid, a fourth something chilled; one wants cooked food, another raw, another chooses roasted, another grilled," which sounds rather like the grilled in his lesson's dialogue. Skipping forward to the twentieth century, restaurants throughout China were closed down for being bourgeois, anti-revolution institutions and were replaced by communal canteens for the workers. Restaurants began to reopen after Deng Xiao Ping opened China's economy with western fast food restaurants like KFC and McDonalds, appearing as a luxury treat in the nineteen eighties. Today there are tens of thousands of restaurants in Beijing alone offering food from all over the world from Uzbekistani to Canadian to Brazilian to Hungarian. Also, restaurants offering regional cuisines from around China (such as Sichuan, Xinjiang, and Yunnan) are very popular, especially the restaurants attached to the regional governmental offices which are said to be the most authentic.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #11

Tell them what you really think in Chinese

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#11

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你喜欢这个吗？
2. 喜欢，你呢？
3. 我...喜欢你。
4. 你太可爱了。

ENGLISH

1. A : Do you like this ?
2. B : Yes, I do. And you?
3. A : I...I like you.
4. B : You are so cute.

PINYIN

1. Nǐ xǐhuān zhège ma?
2. Xǐhuān, nǐ ne?
3. Wǒ ...xǐhuān nǐ.
4. Nǐ tài kěài le.

TRADITIONAL

1. 你喜歡這個嗎？
2. 喜歡，你呢？
3. 我...喜歡你。
4. 你太可愛了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
可爱	可愛	kěài	cute, lovely	adjective
聪明	聰明	cōngmíng	intelligent, smart	adjective
讨厌	討厭	tǎoyàn	annoying	adjective
坏	壞	huài	bad	adjective
幽默	幽默	yōumò	humorous	adjective
诚实	誠實	chéngshí	honest	adjective
有才	有才	yǒu cái	talented	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

可爱的小孩 *kě'ài de xiǎohái* lovely kid	可爱的小狗 *kě'ài de xiǎogǒu* lovely puppy
宝宝好可爱呀。 *Bǎobao hǎo kě'ài yā.* The baby is so cute.	他非常聪明。 *Tā fēicháng cōngming.* He is very smart.
太讨厌了！ *Tài tǎoyàn le!* So annoying!	他是个坏男孩。 *Tā shì ge huài nánhái.* He's a bad boy.
坏消息 *huài xiāoxi* bad news	拇指朝下指表示不好。 *Mǔzhǐ cháoxià zhǐ biǎoshì bùhǎo.* Thumbs down means bad.
不好的一天 *bùhǎo de yì tiān* bad day	那个男人很坏。 *Nà ge nánrén hěn huài.* The man is bad.
他太坏了。 *Tā tài huài le.* He is so bad.	她男朋友很幽默。 *Tā nánpéngyou hěn yōumò.* Her boyfriend is very funny.
他是个诚实的孩子。 *Tā shì ge chéngshí de háizi.* He is an honest kid.	你太有才了。 *Nǐ tài yǒu cái le.* You are so talented.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Verb Echoing in Yes-No Type Questions
喜欢，你呢？
Xǐhuān, nǐ ne?
"Yes, I do. And you?"

When studying Chinese, many foreigners had trouble choosing the correct verbs when answering a yes or no type questions since in English, the easy way is to use the "be" word to answer almost any question. In fact, there is a very simple rule for Chinese as well. Remember to always repeat the same verb that was used in the question sentence. For example, in our dialogue, when asked 你喜欢这个吗？ (*Nǐ xǐhuān zhège ma?*), note instead of saying, 是 (*shì*) or 是的 (*shìde*) as in the English habit, the verb in the answer used was to repeat 喜欢 (*xǐhuān*) from the question.

For Example:

1. - 你爱我吗？ *Nǐ ài wǒ ma?* ("Do you love me?")
   - 爱。 *ài。* ("Yes, I do.")
2. - 你好了吗？ *Nǐhǎole ma?* ("Are you recovered?")
   - 好了。 *Hǎole.* ("Yes, I am.")
3. - 是他吗？ *Shì tā ma?* ("Is it him?")
   - 是。 *Shì.* ("Yes, it is.")
4. - 他们到了吗？ *Tāmen dào le ma?* ("Have they arrived?")
   - 到了。 *Dào le.* ("Yes, they have.")
5. - 你吃早饭了吗？ *Nǐ chī zǎofàn le ma?* ("Did you have breakfast?")
   - 吃了。 *Chī le.* ("Yes, I did.")
6. - 你看过这个电影吗？ *Nǐ kàn guo zhège diànyǐng ma?* ("Have you seen this movie?")
   - 看过。 *Kàn guo.* ("Yes, I have.")

Note that to express negative meaning, there are two negative forms, 不 and 没. Generally if the question was asking about certain past experiences or things that supposedly happened in the past, the negative answer should be 没 plus the verb used in the question. On the other hand, if the question was only asking about intentions of doing something or habitual actions, the negative answer should be 不 plus the verb used in the question. For example, the question of 你吃吗？ which is asking "someone's intention to eat." In this case, the negative answer should be 不吃。 On the other hand, if the question is 你吃了吗？ which is asking "whether the action of eating is completed or not," the negative answer should be 没吃. Therefore, for questions containing the particle 了 or 过, which are indicating markers of past action, the negative answers should be 没 plus the verb.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Polite Conversation in China

One of the most common conversation starters in China is *Ni chi le ma?* which means, "Have you eaten?" Although this reflects the Chinese's love of food, it is primarily a small-talk conversation starter similar to how British people often talk about the weather. Don't be surprised if small-talk with Chinese people involves subjects that might be considered rude in the west such as your weight, your age, or how much money you make. Be careful with conversations related to taboo subjects such as Taiwan, Tibet, or human rights in China. That is not to say that these subjects should not be discussed but make sure you have built up a relationship with the person first and listen to what the other person has to say about the subject. Traditionally many Chinese enter a conversation not trying to win an argument but to share information and agree with each other so they may not be able to debate issues with you or find it embarrassing or uncomfortable to do so.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #12
Saving Energy in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#12

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 这屋里有点儿黑。
2. 要开灯吗？
3. 要。
4. 对不起，没电了。

ENGLISH

1. A : It is a bit dark in this room.
2. B : Need the light turned on?
3. A : Yes.
4. B : I am sorry, the electricity is out.

PINYIN

1. Zhè wū lǐ yǒudiǎner hēi.
2. Yào kāidēng ma?
3. Yào.
4. duìbuqǐ, méidiàn le.

TRADITIONAL

1. 這屋裏有點兒黑。
2. 要開燈嗎？
3. 要。
4. 對不起，沒電了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
屋里	屋裏	wū lǐ	inside the room	noun
开灯	開燈	kāidēng	to turn on the light	verb phrase
关灯	關燈	guāndēng	to turn off the light	verb phrase
要	要	yào	to want	verb
黑	黑	hēi	black	adjective
暗	暗	àn	dim	adjective
停电	停電	tíngdiàn	to loose electricity, to have a blackout	verb phrase
没电	沒電	méidiàn	to have no power, to be out of batteries	verb phrase
省电	省電	shěng diàn	to save power	verb phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

屋里有很多人。 *Wū lǐ yǒu hěn duō rén.* There are a lot of people in the room.	开灯时要小心。 *Kāi dēng shí yào xiǎoxīn.* Be careful when you turn on the light.
你关灯了吗？ *Nǐ guān dēng le ma?* Did you turn off the light?	我想要去超市。 *Wǒ xiǎng yào qù chāoshì.* I would like to go to the supermarket.
她最喜欢黑色。 *Tā zuì xǐhuān hēisè.* She likes black the most.	屋里很暗。 *Wū lǐ hěn àn.* It is very dark in the room.
我家停电了。 *Wǒ jiā tíngdiàn le.* The electricity is out at my house.	我的手机没电了。 *Wǒ de shǒujī méi diàn le.* My mobile phone is out of battery.
用这个可以省电。 *Yòng zhège kěyǐ shěng diàn.* Using this can save energy.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Verb 要 (*yào*)
要开灯吗？
Yào kāidēng ma?
"Need the light turned on?"

Today's grammar is dedicated to the word 要. This is a frequently used verb with a variety of meanings. The first meaning of 要 is "to want." It is often used in conjunction with another verb to express to want to do something. For example, the sentence 我要吃苹果 (*wǒ yào chī píngguǒ*) means, "I want to eat an apple." However, speaking in this tone would somehow make you sound a bit demanding and childish. To soften the tone you could add another verb, 想, in front of 要吃 such as 他想要吃火锅。(*Tā xiǎng yào chī huǒguō*), meaning, "He wants to have hot pot."Another example could be the one from our dialogue, 要开灯吗？(*Yào kāidēng ma?*)

The second meaning of 要 is "to need to," which is short for the words 需要. This meaning of 要 is often used in imperative sentences.

For Example:

1. 感冒就要多喝水。
   /Gǎnmào jiù yào duō hē shuǐ.
   "If you caught a cold, you need to drink more water."
2. 你要好好学习。
   Nǐ yào hǎohāo xuéxí.
   "You need to study hard."
3. 这个要放屋里。
   Zhge yào fàng wū lǐ.
   "This needs to be put inside."

The last meaning of 要 we want to talk about is when 要 is used as an indication of future tense meaning something is going to happen. And it often forms a 要...了 pattern in the sentence in this case.

For Example:

1. 要下雨了.
   Yào xiàyǔ le.
   "It is going to rain."
2. 他要回家了。
   Tā yào huí jiā le.
   "He is going home."
3. 明天他要去英国了。
   Míngtiān tā yào qù Yīngguó le.
   "Tomorrow he is going to the U.K."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

China's Electricity

One of the most noticeable features of Chinese cities, especially at night time, is the ubiquitous neon lights to be found outside almost every shop, billboard, and many public buildings. Increasingly these are being joined by enormous Blade Runner-esque video screens making even third and fourth tier cities resemble Times Square or Piccadilly Circus. It is features such as these, which have all appeared in the last twenty years or so that have lead China to become the world's second largest energy consumer after the USA. Most of this electricity is generated using coal from China's huge coal fields in the north and north-east of the country though there is a fairly large amount of power produced by hydropower in the south-west. The unfortunate result of all this coal use is some of the highest levels of pollution in the world and many resulting health problems, not to forget the many miners who lose their lives in coal mines every year. There is an increasing awareness of environmental issues in China but many worry that it could be too little, too late.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #13

Do these Chinese clothes make me look fat?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#13

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 这件衣服好看吗？
2. 好看。
3. 大不大？
4. 不太大。正好。

ENGLISH

1. Does this piece of clothing look good?
2. Yes.
3. Is it too big?
4. No, it's just right.

PINYIN

1. Zhè jiàn yīfu hǎokàn ma?
2. Hǎokàn.
3. Dà bù dà?
4. Bùtàidà. Zhènghǎo.

TRADITIONAL

1. 這件衣服好看嗎？
2. 好看。
3. 大不大？
4. 不太大。正好。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
衣服	衣服	yīfu	clothes	noun
好看	好看	hǎokàn	good looking	adjective
西服	西服	xīfú	suit	noun
正好	正好	zhènghǎo	just right	adjective
大	大	dà	big	adjective
小	小	xiǎo	small	adjective
肥	肥	féi	fat, baggy	adjective
瘦	瘦	shòu	thin/tight	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

这件衣服破了。 *Zhè jiàn yīfu pò le.* This piece of clothing is torn.	我好看吗？ *Wǒ hǎokàn ma?* Am I good-looking?
这件西服太大了。 *Zhè jiàn xīfú tài dà le.* This suit is too big.	你的钱正好。 *Nǐ de qián zhènghǎo.* You have the exact change.
这条裤子有点儿大。 *Zhè tiáo kùzi yǒudiǎnr dà.* This pair of trousers is a little bit too big.	这间屋太小了。 *Zhè jiān wū tài xiǎo le.* This room is too small.
这条裙子有点儿肥。 *Zhè tiáo qúnzi yǒudiǎnr féi.* This skirt is a little bit too baggy.	他的裤子太瘦了。 *Tā de kùzi tài shòule.* His trousers are too tight.

GRAMMAR

The focus of this lesson is "( ) +不+ ( )" to form questions.
大不大？
Dà bù dà?
"Is it big?"

Today we introduce a very simple pattern that can be used to form simple questions. We combine the verb and its negative form together which end up looking like "( ) + 不 + ( )" such as "来不来"lái bù lái . This is actually a shortened form of "来还是不来"lái hái shì bù lái which literally means come or not come. In spoken language, we simplified this to just the verb followed by its negative form. This pattern can apply to adjectives as well such as in our dialogue, "大不大?". Here are some more example sentences.

1. 你吃不吃？
Nǐ chī bù chī?
Do you eat (or not)?

2. 你看不看电视？
Nǐ kàn bù kàn diànshì?
Do you (want to) watch TV (or not)?

3. 你会不会做饭？
Nǐ huìbuhuì zuòfàn?
Can you cook (or not)?

4. 这件衣服好看不好看？
Zhè jiàn yīfu hǎokàn bù hǎo kàn?
Is this clothes pretty (or not)?

5. 他老不老？
Tā lǎo bù lǎo?
Is he old (or not)?

6. 我的衣服脏不脏？
Wǒ de yīfu zāng bù zāng?
Is my clothes dirty (or not)?

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Obesity is an increasing problem in China though with some big differences to obesity in the West. Whereas in the west, obesity is usually connected the poor and poverty, in China it is almost entirely a problem of the urban, affluent population. In particular, children are being affected as the one child policy means every child has two parents and four grandparents willing to spoil their 'little emperor' with all manner of sweet cakes, candies and drinks. Also many Chinese lives are increasingly sedentary as transportation moves from bicycle to car and more and more office jobs appear. Although gyms are relatively common in urban areas, other activities like jogging or cycling for exercise sake are still quite rare. While the addition of western junk foods may have contributed, equally the excess of Chinese foods have played their part. It is quite strange to have seen China go from starvation in the fifties and early sixties to the gluttony of the last decade.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #14
Finding Important Places in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#14

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 洗手间在哪儿？
2. 在后面。
3. 我看不见。
4. 就在那儿！后面。

ENGLISH

1. A : Where is the washroom?
2. B : It's at the back.
3. A : I can't see.
4. B : Just over there! At the back.

PINYIN

1. Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?
2. Zàihòumian.
3. Wǒ kànbùjiàn.
4. Jiù zài nàr! Hòumian.

TRADITIONAL

1. 洗手間在哪兒？
2. 在後面。
3. 我看不見。
4. 就在那兒！後面。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
洗手间	洗手間	xǐshǒujiān	washroom	noun
厕所	廁所	cèsuǒ	toilet	noun
超市	超市	chāoshì	supermarket	noun
药店	藥店	yàodiàn	drug store	noun
银行	銀行	yínháng	bank	noun
前面	前面	qiánmian	in front	proposition
卫生间	衛生間	wèishēngjiān	toilet	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我要去洗手间。 *Wǒ yào qù xǐshǒujiān.* I want to go to the washroom.	我们湖边的房子室内没有厕所。 *Wǒmen húbiān de fángzi shìnèi méiyǒu cèsuǒ.* Our lake house does not have an indoor toilet.
室内厕所 *shìnèi cèsuǒ* indoor toilet	马桶 *mǎtǒng* toilet bowl
厕所在哪儿? *Cèsuǒ zài nǎr?* Where is the toilet?	超市在哪儿？ *Chāoshì zài nǎr?* Where is the supermarket?
药店在超市后面。 *Yàodiàn zài chāoshì hòumian.* The drug store is behind the supermarket.	银行在哪儿？ *Yínháng zài nǎr?* Where is the bank?
你可以到银行去转账。 *Nǐ kěyǐ dào yínháng qù zhuǎnzhàng.* You can go to the bank to transfer funds.	银行在前面。 *Yínháng zài qiánmian.* The bank is up ahead.
你在我的前面。 *Nǐ zài wǒ de qiánmiàn.* You're in front of me.	卫生间在后面。 *Wèishēngjiān zài hòumian.* The toilet is at the back.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 在 (*zài*)Used as a Verb and Proposition Word
洗手间在哪儿？
Xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?
"Where is the washroom?"

在 (*zài*) is an interesting word in that it can be used both as verb and proposition word in sentences. When used as a verb, 在 (*zài*) means, "to exist," such as in our dialogue, 洗手间在哪儿？ (*xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?*) The negative form of 在 (*zài*) as a verb is the same like most other verbs. We put 不 (*bù*) before the verb.

For Example:

1. 他现在在上海。
   Tā xiànzài zài Shànghǎi.
   "He is in Shanghai now."
2. 猫在外面。
   Māo zài wàimian.
   "The cat is outside."
3. 我妈妈不在家。
   Wǒ māma bù zài jiā.
   "My mom is not home."

You probably have noticed that in the above sentences, 在 (*zài*) is followed by a location noun to indicate where there subject is. In some cases, there is no need to have a place following 在 (*zài*). When we simply ask if someone is in, we could say, XXX在吗？ The answer could be 不在 (*bùzài*) or 在 (*zài*). This sentence is frequently used at the start of a phone conversation.

For more advanced beginners, you may also have encountered 在 (*zài*) as a proposition word in a sentence. In this case, 在 (*zài*), often leading a time or place phrase, follows right after the subject to indicate the time or location of some actions that take place. Note when we translate these sentences into English, the 在 (*zài*) phrase is often at the end of the sentence.

For Example:

1. 我在家工作。
   Wǒ zài jiā gōngzuò.
   "I work at home."
2. 他在城里打工。
   Tā zài chénglǐ dǎgōng.
   "He works in the city."
3. 我在电影院等你。
   Wǒ zài diànyǐngyuàn děng nǐ.
   "I will wait for you at the cinema."
4. 爷爷在去年冬天去世了。
   Yéye zài qùnián dōngtiān qùshì le.
   "Grandpa passed away last year."
5. 车在五分钟前开走了。
   Chē zài wǔ fēnzhōng qián kāi zǒu le.
   "The car has left five minutes ago."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Bathrooms

The Chinese claim to have invented the toilet and toilet paper over two thousand years ago. However, for many foreigners the typical Chinese toilet is a place to fear and dread. Unfortunately, many toilets in China are not known for their fragrance or cleanliness. Be warned that rural toilets in particular may be little more than a hole in the ground (with several other holes next to them should you get lonely in there). Many toilets require the user to squat usually facing away from the door. There is sometimes a pipe for you to hold onto. Don't forget to bring your own paper or purchase some from the vendors occasionally found just outside the door to the toilet. Fortunately, western style toilets are increasingly common in the cities and can be found in most shopping malls. If in doubt, head for a Starbucks, KFC, McDonald's or other fast food restaurants. That said, the traditional squat position is said to be much healthier than sitting on the golden throne and may help prevent many diseases.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #15
It's All About Who You Know in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#15

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你是谁？
2. 你不认识我吗？
3. 我应该认识你吗？
4. 我是你儿子！

ENGLISH

1. Who are you?
2. Don't you know me?
3. Should I know you?
4. I am your son!

PINYIN

1. Nǐ shì shéi?
2. Nǐ bù rènshi wǒ ma?
3. Wǒ yīnggāi rènshi nǐ ma?
4. Wǒ shì nǐ érzi!

TRADITIONAL

1. 你是誰？
2. 你不認識我嗎？
3. 我應該認識你嗎？
4. 我是你兒子！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
认识	認識	rènshi	to know	verb
应该	應該	yīnggāi	should	adverb
同事	同事	tóngshì	colleague	noun
谁	誰	shéi	who	pronoun
老同学	老同學	lǎo tóngxué	former classmate	noun
邻居	鄰居	línjū	neighbor	noun
前男友	前男友	qián nán yǒu	ex-boyfriend	noun
爱人	愛人	àiren	partner	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我们刚刚认识。 *Wǒmen gānggāng rènshi.* We just met.	你应该找他。 *Nǐ yīnggāi zhǎo tā.* You should go find him.
我们明天应该休息。 *Wǒmen míngtiān yīnggāi xiūxi.* We should rest tomorrow.	这是我同事。 *Zhè shì wǒ tóngshì.* This is my colleague.
请问你是谁？ *Qǐngwèn nǐ shì shéi?* Excuse me, who are you?	我和老同学好久不见了。 *Wǒ hé lǎo tóngxué hǎojiǔ bùjiàn le.* I haven't seen my former classmates in a long time.
我们是邻居。 *Wǒmen shì línjū.* We are neighbors.	他是你的前男友吗？ *Tā shì nǐ de qián nányǒu ma?* Is he your ex-boyfriend?
你爱人在哪儿工作？ *Nǐ àiren zài nǎr gōngzuò?* Where does your partner work?	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Rhetorical Questions
你不认识我吗？
Nǐ bù rènshi wǒ ma?
"Don't you know me?"

Rhetorical questions are a fairly common sentence type. The formation of it is basically a normal narrative sentence plus the question marker 吗 (*ma*) at the end. This type of sentence is often used to put an extra emphasis on an obvious reason or truth held by the speaker. The sentence itself can be either positively or negatively expressed. However, when the verb is in negative form, it strengthens the positive meaning. On the other hand, when the verb is in positive form, it actually emphasizes the negative meaning. For example, in our dialogue is 你不认识我吗？ (*Nǐ bù rènshi wǒ ma?*). Although the verb 不认识 (*bùrènshi*) is in its negative form, the meaning of the sentence is actually, "You should know me." Another sentence from our dialogue, 我应该认识你吗？ (*Wǒ yīnggāi rènshi nǐ ma?*) is also a rhetorical question with a positive verb, 应该 (*yīnggāi*). As a result, the speaker is actually emphasizing the meaning that "I shouldn't know you." Note that when you use a rhetorical sentence to express yourself, a stronger tone should be put on the verb and the objective in the sentence.

For Example:

1. 这是他爸爸吗？
   Zhè shì tā bàba ma?
   "Is this his dad?"
2. 他不是老师吗？
   Tā bù shì lǎoshī ma?
   "Isn't he a teacher?"
3. 今天不是星期三吗？
   Jīntiān bù shì xīngqīsān ma?
   "Isn't today Wednesday?"
4. 你没看见吗？
   Nǐ méi kànjiàn ma?
   "Didn't you see?"
5. 他不去吗？
   Tā bù qù ma?
   "Isn't he going?"
6. 你不爱我了吗？
   Nǐ bù ài wǒ le ma?
   "Don't you love me anymore?"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Connections

Any guide to business in China always mentions the importance of the concept of *guanxi.* This word roughly translates as "connections and relationships" but is a bit more complex than that. It refers to the importance of personal relationships when doing business or asking for favors. While it is possible to get things done in China without *guanxi*, having it means things will get done faster and more smoothly. There are whole books written about the idea of *guanxi* such as the complexities of social relationships.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #16
Time, Precious Time in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#16

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 莉莉，咱们晚上吃饭吧。
2. 不行，我有事。
3. 那明天晚上？
4. 明天我也有事。
5. 那后天？大后天？

ENGLISH

1. A : Lily, let's have dinner tonight.
2. B : Sorry, I am busy.
3. A : Then how about tomorrow night?
4. B : I am also busy tomorrow night.
5. A : Then the day after tomorrow? Or the following day?

PINYIN

1. Lìlì, zánmen wǎnshang chīfàn ba.
2. Bù xíng, wǒ yǒushì.
3. Nà míngtiān wǎnshang?
4. Míngtiān wǒ yě yǒushì.
5. Nā Hòutiān? Dà hòutiān?

TRADITIONAL

1. 莉莉，咱們晚上吃飯吧。
2. 不行，我有事。
3. 那明天晚上？
4. 明天我也有事。
5. 那後天？大後天？

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
晚上	晚上	wǎnshàng	evening	noun
有事	有事	yǒushì	to be busy or engaged	verb phrase
咱们	咱們	zánmen	we/us	pronoun
明天	明天	míngtiān	tomorrow	noun
下星期	下星期	xiàxīngqī	next week	noun
下个月	下個月	xià gè yuè	next month	noun
后天	後天	hòutiān	the day after tomorrow	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

他晚上回家。 *Tā wǎnshang huíjiā.* He goes home in the evening.	他有事出去了。 *Tā yǒushì chūqu le.* He had something to do and went out.
咱们走吧。 *Zánmen zǒu ba.* Let's go.	我明天上班。 *Wǒ míngtiān shàngbān.* I go to work tomorrow.
我下星期有事。 *Wǒ xiàxīngqīyǒushì.* I am busy next week.	他下个月出差。 *Tā xià ge yuè chūchāi.* He is going on a business trip next month.
明天的明天是后天。 *Míngtiān de míngtiān shì hòutiān.* Tomorrow's tomorrow is the day after tomorrow.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 那... (*nà...*) Used as a Conjunction Word
那明天晚上？
Nà míngtiān wǎnshang?
"Then how about tomorrow night?"

那 (*nà*) is a common pronoun that most of you are probably already very familiar with. Today we introduce another usage of 那 (*nà*) as a conjunction word to start a sentence meaning, "then or in that case..." This is often heard in spoken conversation. And the speaker usually is about to give a suggestion. In our dialogue, 那明天晚上？ (*nà míngtiān wǎnshang?*) is a suggestion given by the speaker, "Then how about tomorrow night?" This function of 那 (*nà*) is being used again in 那后天？ (*nà Hòutiān?*) by the speaker to give another suggestion after his initial suggestion was turned down, "In that case, how about the day after tomorrow?" Here are some more example sentences.

For Example:

1. 那我们走吧。
   Nà wǒmen zǒu ba.
   "Let's go then."
2. 那你先来吧。
   Nà nǐ xiān lái ba.
   "Then how about you start first."
3. 那让我试试吧。
   Nā ràng wǒ shìshi ba.
   "In that case let me have a try."
4. 那下星期怎么样？
   Nà xiàxīngqī zěnmeyàng?
   "Then how about next week?"
5. 那我马上回来。
   Nà wǒ mǎshànghuílai.
   "Then I will be right back."
6. 那就这样吧。
   Nà jiù zhèyàng ba.
   "Then let's leave it like this."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Dining

Dining out is a very popular pastime in China. Restaurants are available for almost every type of food imaginable and varying from dirt cheap hole-in-the-wall joints selling basic but delicious dishes to eye-wateringly expensive, beautifully designed restaurants serving exquisite delicacies. Restaurants are often very noisy, sociable places filled with large groups of family members, co-workers, or friends. Traditionally, several dishes are chosen and ordered by one person and shared amongst the group, usually accompanied by either hot Chinese tea, water, beer or perhaps Chinese liquor. Starters and desserts don't usually play a part in Chinese meals, though there are often sweet dishes that make an appearance at the same time as more savory fare. The actual eating and sharing of food can go on for an extended time compared to eating in the west with participants occasionally serving each other or placing a particularly delicious morsel on their acquaintance's plate. I recall having three chicken's feet, a popular treat, placed in my bowl by a colleague trying to be friendly. Once eating is finished, it is usually time to leave so don't expect the lingering conversation over coffee that often occurs in the west. Fortunately for those who prefer not to venture out too far, many restaurants are happy to deliver food straight to your door including, for sofa-bound junk food addicts, KFC and McDonalds.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #17
Shopping for a New Chinese Computer?

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#17

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你的笔记本不错。
2. 新买的。
3. 苹果的？
4. 山寨的。

ENGLISH

1. A : Your laptop isn't bad.
2. B : I just bought it.
3. A : Is it an Apple?
4. B : It's a knockoff version.

PINYIN

1. Nǐ de bǐjìběn bùcuò.
2. Xīn mǎi de.
3. Píngguǒ de?
4. Shānzhài de.

TRADITIONAL

1. 你的筆記本不錯。
2. 新買的。
3. 蘋果的？
4. 山寨的。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
笔记本儿	筆記本兒	bǐjìběnr	laptop	noun
二手	二手	èrshǒu	second hand	adjective
不错	不錯	bùcuò	not bad	adjective
苹果	蘋果	píngguǒ	Apple	noun
山寨	山寨	shānzhài	knock-off brand	noun
台式电脑	台式電腦	táishì diànnǎo	desktop computer	noun
新	新	xīn	new	adjective
旧	舊	jiù	old	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

这个笔记本儿真好看。

Zhège bǐjìběnr zhēn hǎokàn.

This laptop computer is really pretty.

这个电脑是二手的。

Zhège diànnǎo shì èrshǒu de.

This computer is second hand.

这个宾馆不错。

Zhège bīnguǎn bùcuò.

This hotel is not bad.

他的英文不错。

Tā de yīngwén bùcuò.

His English is pretty good.

苹果电脑很贵。

Píngguǒ diànnǎo hěn guì.

Apple computers are very expensive.

想要山寨手机吗？

Xiǎng yào shānzhài shǒujī ma?

Do you want a copycat cellphone?

新台式电脑

xīn táishì diànnǎo

new desktop computer

我有两台电脑，一个笔记本电脑，一个台式电脑。

Wǒ yǒu liǎng tái diànnǎo, yī gè bǐjìběn diànnǎo, yī gè táishì diànnǎo.

I have two computers: a laptop computer and a desktop computer.

我只有台式电脑。

Wǒ zhǐyǒu táishì diànnǎo.

I only have a desktop computer.

你的手机真新。

Nǐ de shǒujī zhēn xīn.

Your cellphone is really new.

旧的也不错。

Jiù de yě bùcuò.

Old ones are alright too.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Auxiliary Particle 的 (*de*)
新买的。
Xīn mǎi de.
"I just bought it."

In this lesson, we reintroduce the auxiliary particle 的 (*de*). Most of you probably are familiar with its function as an indicator of ownership when it is placed after a pronoun. An example could be 我的书 (*wǒ de shū*) as, "my book."
In our dialogue today, we come across another usage of 的 (*de*). 的 (*de*) follows the verb phrase 新买 (*xīnmǎi*), becoming 新买的 (*xīnmǎide*), a noun phrase indicating the subject the two friends are talking about. Same goes with the next line, 苹果的 (*píngguǒde*). The noun 苹果 (*píngguǒ*) with the particle 的 forms a noun phrase indicating the subject again. In these cases, 新买的 (*xīnmǎide*) is the shortened version of 新买的笔记本儿 (*xīnmǎide bǐjìběnr*) and 苹果的 (*píngguǒde*) is the shortened version of 苹果的笔记本儿 (*píngguǒ de bǐjìběnr*). Therefore, the real noun subject 笔记本儿 (*bǐjìběnr*) is omitted in this situation.

For Example:

1. 他是新来的。
   Tā shì xīnláide.
   "He is a newcomer."
2. 这是昨天的。
   Zhè shì zuótiān de.
   "This is yesterday's."
3. 做好的在那儿。
   Zuò hǎo de zài nàr.
   "Those already finished are over there."
4. 没有的举手。
   Méiyǒu de jǔshǒu.
   "Those who don't have it raise your hand."

The particle 的 not only can follow verbs and nouns, it can sometimes follow adjectives to refer to the subjects in the context while omitting the noun after 的。

For Example:

1. 我不喜欢喝凉的。
   Wǒ bù xǐhuān hē liáng de.
   "I don't like to drink cold stuff."
2. 这钱是假的。
   Zhè qián shì jiǎ de.
   "The money is fake."
3. 红的是最好的。
   Hóng de shì zuì hǎo de.
   "Red ones are the best."
4. 高的是她男朋友。
   Gāo de shì tā nánpéngyou.

"The tall one is her boyfriend."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Faking It in China

Many tourists visiting China spend a lot of time shopping in markets amazed at the low prices for what look like famous international brand names. However, take a closer look and that LV bag or those Nike shoes may turn out to be a VL bag or Mike shoes. There is a huge, underground industry in China for *shanzai*, or "fake goods" including clothes, DVDs, electrical goods, toys, and other things. The term *shanzhai* (山寨) itself literally means, "mountain village" or "mountain stronghold" in reference to the historical situation of mountain stockades of regional warlords or bandits, far away from official control such as in the classic Chinese novel "The Outlaws of the Marsh." Although *shanzhai* goods are technically illegal, the industry is so huge and regulations are so poorly enforced that it is very easy to run a *shanzhai* business. The term is so popular that it has taken on use to describe any cheap and unofficial alternative product so there are *shanzhai* singers who rip off more popular artists, *shanzhai* movies which steal ideas from other more successful films, and even *shanzhai* celebrities.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #18
A stressful subway experience in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#18

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 对不起，请让一下。
2. 我也下车。
3. 小心点儿!
4. 怎么啦？
5. 你踩了我的脚。

ENGLISH

1. A : Excuse me, please let me through.
2. B : I am getting off too.
3. A : Be careful!
4. B : What's wrong?
5. A : You stepped on my feet.

PINYIN

1. Duìbuqǐ, qǐng ràng yīxià.
2. Wǒ yě xiàchē.
3. Xiǎoxīn diǎnr!
4. Zěnme la?
5. Nǐ cǎi le wǒ de jiǎo.

TRADITIONAL

1. 對不起，請讓一下。
2. 我也下車。
3. 小心點兒!
4. 怎麼啦？
5. 你踩了我的腳。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
对不起	對不起	duìbuqǐ	sorry	others
让一下	讓一下	ràng yīxià	let me through	phrase
脚	腳	jiǎo	foot	noun
下车	下車	xiàchē	to get off, to get out (train or car)	verb phrase
小心	小心	xiǎoxīn	be careful	verb phrase
踩	踩	cǎi	to step on	verb
怎么啦	怎麼啦	zěnme la	what's wrong	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

对不起，该我了。 *Duìbuqǐ, gāi wǒ le.* Excuse me, it's my turn.	让一下，我要下车。 *Ràng yīxià, wǒ yào xià chē.* Make way, I have to get off.
我脚疼。 *Wǒ jiǎo téng.* My foot hurt.	我在前面下车。 *Wǒ zài qiánmian xià chē.* I am getting off ahead.
下车时要小心。 *Xià chē shí yào xiǎoxīn.* Be careful when getting off.	他不小心踩了我。 *Tā bùxiǎoxīn cǎi le wǒ.* He stepped on me accidentally.
你的脚怎么啦？ *Nǐ de jiǎo zěnme la?* What's wrong with your feet?	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is (一)点儿 (*yī*)*diǎnr* versus 一下 (*yīxià*)
请让一下。
qǐng ràng yīxià.
"Please let me through."

Today we are going to compare how to use (一)点儿 (*yī*)*diǎnr* and 一下 in sentences. Both words are frequently used in spoken language. We often use 一下 (*yīxià*) after verbs in a sentence to give an impression that the action required only takes a little time and creates a casual and friendly tone. In our dialogue, 请让一下 (*qǐng ràng yīxià*) emphasizes the action of letting someone pass through, which takes a very short time. Compared to 请让让 (*qǐng ràngrang*), the former sounds more friendly and casual.

For Example:

1. 你看一下。
   Nǐ kàn yīxià.
   "Please take a look."
2. 我介绍一下。
   Wǒ jièshào yīxià.
   "Let me introduce."
3. 帮我拿一下。
   Bāng wǒ náyīxià.
   "Please hold it for me."

(一)点儿 (*yī*)*diǎnr* can describe both verbs and adjectives. It emphasizes the degree of the action or status meaning "a little bit" such as 高点 (*gāo diǎnr*) meaning, "a little bit higher."

For Example:

1. 这个颜色深点儿。
   Zhège yánsè shēn diǎnr.
   "This color is a bit darker."
2. 请走近点儿。
   Qǐng zǒujìn diǎnr.
   "Please walk a bit closer."
3. 现在的时间早点儿。
   Xiànzài de shíjiān zǎo diǎnr.
   "The time now is a bit early."
4. 让我尝一点儿、
   Ràng wǒ cháng yīdiǎnr.
   "Let me taste a little bit."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Another Side to the Chinese

China has a huge population and much of that population have moved to the cities. This has put real strains on the transport systems, streets, and shops. Sadly the behavior of some Chinese has contributed to these stressful environments. Pushing and shoving in shops and not giving way to others on buses and subways are irritatingly common. Tragically, in 2007 three people were killed and thirty were injured in a stampede in a supermarket in Chongqing after discount cooking oil was put on sale. However, do note that many Chinese are equally irritated by the lack of concern for others and there are many signs and public campaigns to encourage considerate behavior.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #19
The perfect Chinese boyfriend

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#19

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你有车吗？
2. 有。
3. 你有房子吗？
4. 有。
5. 我爱你。
6. 我还有一个老婆。

ENGLISH

1. A : Do you have a car?
2. B : Yes.
3. A : Do you have a house?
4. B : Yes.
5. A : I love you.
6. B : I also have a wife.

PINYIN

1. Nǐ yǒu chē ma?
2. Yǒu.
3. Nǐ yǒu fángzi ma?
4. Yǒu.
5. Wǒ ài nǐ.
6. Wǒ hái yǒu yī ge lǎopo.

TRADITIONAL

1. 你有車嗎？
2. 有。
3. 你有房子嗎？
4. 有。
5. 我愛你。
6. 我還有一個老婆。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
车	車	chē	vehicle	noun
房子	房子	fángzi	house	noun
老婆	老婆	lǎopo	wife	noun
楼房	樓房	lóufáng	apartment building, high rise	noun
平房	平房	píngfáng	single story house	noun
别墅	別墅	biéshù	town house	noun
民宅	民宅	mínzhái	older apartment	noun
公寓	公寓	gōngyù	condominium	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我买了一辆新车。 *Wǒ mǎi le yī liàng xīn chē.* I bought a new car.	大房子 *dàfángzi* big house
两层的房子 *liǎng céng de fángzi* two-story house	房子在哪儿？ *Fángzi zài nǎr?* Where is the house?
这套房子多少钱？ *Zhè tào fángzi duōshǎo qián?* How much is this house worth?	他很爱他老婆。 *Tā hěn ài tā lǎopo.* He loves his wife very much.

我住楼房。 *Wǒ zhù lóufáng.* I live in an apartment building.	她家住平房。 *Tā jiā zhù píngfáng.* Her family lives in a one story house.
这个别墅有三层。 *Zhège biéshù yǒu sān céng.* This town house has three stories.	这个楼是民宅。 *Zhège lóu shì mínzhái.* This building is a residential building.
这套公寓很贵。 *Zhè tào gōngyù hěn guì.* This condominium is very expensive.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 还有 (*háiyǒu*) versus 也有 (*yěyǒu*)
我还有一个老婆。*Wǒ hái yǒu yī ge lǎopo.*
"I also have a wife."

In today's grammar section, we are going to compare a pair of verbs with a very similar meaning, 还有 (*háiyǒu*) and 也有 (*yěyǒu*). 还有 (*háiyǒu*) indicates the continuation of a certain action or status of the same subject. It also indicates any further situations introduced to the subject. In our dialogue, there is a pattern of 有...有...还有... (*yǒu ...yǒu ...hái yǒu*). Note the subject is the same person. On the other hand, we use 也有 (*yěyǒu*) when there are two or more subjects having certain similarities in action or status.

For Example:

1. 他有一辆宝马，还有一辆奥迪。
   Tā yǒu yī liàng bǎomǎ, hái yǒu yī liàng àodí.
   "He has a BMW, he also has an Audi."
2. 早点有面包，还有鸡蛋。
   Zǎo diǎn yǒu miànbāo, hái yǒu jīdàn.
   "The breakfast includes bread and egg."
3. 屋里有大人，还有小孩儿。
   Wū lǐ yǒu dàren, hái yǒu xiǎoháir.
   "There are adults as well as children in the room."
4. 他那本书我也有。
   Tā nà běn shū wǒ yě yǒu.
   "I also have the book that he has."
5. 他有这件衬衫，我也有。
   Tā yǒu zhè jiàn chènshān, wǒ yě yǒu.
   "He's got this shirt, I have too."
6. 他有两个女儿，我也有两个女儿。
   Tā yǒu liǎng ge nǚér, wǒ yě yǒu liǎng ge nǚér.
   "He has two daughters, I also have two daughters."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Marriage Expectations

China's rapid modernization has brought about an equally rapid change in social relations and expectations of marriage. Only twenty years ago most couples met and had their marriages arranged through family or close friends. While that still goes on today, dating of all sorts is becoming far more popular. Sadly, this has resulted in a growth of materialism and infidelity. Some women show more concern for the money and luxuries marriage can bring them than the emotional happiness. In the seventies and eighties many women used to expect a sewing machine, a watch, and a bicycle from a potential husband, whereas now, many are not interested unless their suitor has an apartment, a car, and a large amount of savings. So much so that on a recent dating show, a female contestant shocked the nation by stating, "I'd rather sit and cry in the back seat of a BMW than go for a bicycle ride." Perhaps this is a result of the many rich Chinese men have taken on a *liang ge tai tai,* or a "second wife," meaning a mistress for whom they arrange an apartment and other luxuries. In addition, the many barbershops and KTV karaoke halls in the cities are said to offer a lot more than a haircut or opportunity for a sing song. That said, the outrage that followed the dating show contestant's comments suggest that traditional values and family are still very important for most Chinese people.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #20
In China, turning Japanese

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#20

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 你吃过寿司吗？
2. 吃过。
3. 你喝过日本烧酒吗？
4. 喝过。
5. 你去过日本吗？
6. 我是日本人。

ENGLISH

1. A : Have you eaten sushi?
2. B : Yes, I have.
3. A : Have you drunk Japanese sake?
4. B : Yes, I have.
5. A : Have you been to Japan ?
6. B : I am Japanese.

PINYIN

1. Nǐ chīguò shòusīma?
2. Chīguò.
3. Nǐ hē guo rìběn shāojiǔ ma?
4. Hē guo.
5. Nǐ qù guo rìběn ma?
6. Wǒ shì Rìběnrén.

TRADITIONAL

1. 你吃過壽司嗎？
2. 吃過。
3. 你喝過日本燒酒嗎？
4. 喝過。
5. 你去過日本嗎？
6. 我是日本人。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
日本	日本	Rìběn	Japan	noun
日本人	日本人	rìběnrén	Japanese people	noun
日语	日語	rìyǔ	Japanese language	noun
寿司	壽司	shòusī	sushi	noun
烧酒	燒酒	shāojiǔ	Japanese sake	noun
富士山	富士山	fùshìshān	Mt.Fuji	noun
东京	東京	Dōngjīng	Tokyo	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

日本在中国的东边。 *Rìběn zài Zhōngguó de dōngbiān.* Japan is to the east of China.	日本人说日语。 *Rìběn rén shuō Rìyǔ.* Japanese people speak Japanese.
我想学日语。 *Wǒ xiǎng xué Rìyǔ.* I want to learn Japanese.	我喜欢吃寿司。 *Wǒ xǐhuān chī shòusī.* I like to eat sushi.
日本烧酒很好喝。 *Rìběn shāojiǔ hěn hǎohē.* Japanese sake is very nice.	你去过日本的富士山吗？ *Nǐ qù guò Rìběn de fùshìshān ma?* Have you been to the Mt. Fuji in Japan?

东京是日本的首都。

Dōngjīng shì Rìběn de shǒudū.

Tokyo is the capital of Japan.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Particle 过 (*guò*)
你吃过寿司吗？*Nǐ chīguò shòusīma?*
"Have you eaten sushi?"

Today's grammar should be mostly revision for many of you if you have been following our program. However, we deem this as one of the most important aspects of Chinese grammar so we would like to go through this with you once again. Chinese is fundamentally different from English in that there is no word conjugation for different tenses like in English. Apart from the time phrases, 过 following verbs in sentences is a common indication of the action happened in the past. Therefore the combination of verb + 过 is often used to describe the experience of something done in the past.

For Example:

1. 你看过京剧吗？
   Nǐ kàn guo jīngjù ma?
   "Have you watched the Beijing opera before?"
2. 你来过这儿吗？
   Nǐ lái guo zhèr ma?
   "Have you been here before?"
3. 你踢过足球吗？
   Nǐ tī guò zúqiú ma?
   "Have you played soccer before?"
4. 我在这儿游过泳。
   Wǒ zài zhèr yóuguò yǒng.
   "I have swum here before."

To answering such questions, you simply need to echo the verb + 过 (*guò*) to give positive response. For negative response, you put 没 (*méi*) in front of the same verb + 过 (*guò*). Take a look at the following.

For Example:

1. 你吃过这个吗？/ 吃过。
   Nǐ chīguò zhège ma? / Chīguò.
   "Have you eaten this before?" / "Yes, I have."
2. 你见过她男朋友吗？/ 没见过。
   Nǐ jiànguo tā nánpéngyou ma? / Méi jiànguo.
   "Have you met her boyfriend before?" / "No, I have not."
3. 你玩过这个游戏吗？ / 玩过。
   Nǐ wán guo zhège yóuxì ma? / Wán guo.
   "Have you played this game before?" / "Yes, I have."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The Influence of Japan and China

China and Japan have a long history of exchanging ideas and culture. For much of this history, China was very much the more influential with its highly developed culture spreading across the East China Sea. This included architecture, sculpture, painting, calligraphy, medicine, and Chinese written characters called Kanji in Japanese (though the characters often have different meanings in Japanese). The former capital city of Nara was modelled upon the former capital of China, Chang'an (close to present day Xi'an). The iconic Japanese outfit the kimono is thought to have been modelled after clothes worn in Tang Dynasty China. The terrible events of the Second World War and Japan's attempts at colonizing parts of China have cast a black shadow over Japan-China relations, which are reflected in many Chinese people's negative attitudes towards Japan. However, Japanese products, fashion, and cuisine are becoming very popular in China to the point that images of "Hello Kitty" are more common than those of Chairman Mao.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #21
Stay safe on the Chinese roads

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#21

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 怎么走？
2. 左拐。不，右拐。
3. 右拐？
4. 对，就这儿右拐。小心！

ENGLISH

1. A : Where to go?
2. B : Turn left. No, right.
3. A : Turn right?
4. B : Yes, just here turn right. Be careful!

PINYIN

1. Zěnme zǒu?
2. Zuǒguǎi. Bù, yòu guǎi.
3. Yòu guǎi?
4. Duì, jiù zhèr yòu guǎi. Xiǎoxīn!

TRADITIONAL

1. 怎麼走？
2. 左拐。不，右拐。
3. 右拐？
4. 對，就這兒右拐。小心！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
走	走	zǒu	to walk	verb
拐	拐	guǎi	to turn	verb
右转	右轉	yòuzhuǎn	right turn	noun
左转	左轉	zuǒzhuǎn	left turn	noun
一直走	一直走	yīzhí zǒu	go straight	verb phrase
小心	小心	xiǎoxīn	be careful	adjective
停	停	tíng	to stop	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

如果我起床起得早，我会走路上学。 *Rúguǒ wǒ qǐchuáng qǐ de zǎo, wǒ huì zǒulù shàngxué.* If I get up early, I will walk to school.	我每天走路去上班。 *wǒ měi tiān zǒu lù qù shàngbān .* I walk to work every day.
我要走了。 *Wǒ yào zǒu le.* I am leaving.	拐过去就到了。 *Guǎi guòqù jiù dào le.* Turn around and you'll be there.
当你到拐角处，向右转。 *Dāng nǐ dào guǎijiǎochù, xiàng yòu zhuǎn.* When you get to the corner, make a right turn.	这辆汽车正往右转。 *Zhè liàng qìchē zhèng wǎng yòu zhuǎn.* The automobile is turning right.
急右转 *jí yòuzhuǎn* sharp right turn	到第三个红绿灯右转。 *Dào dì sān ge hónglǜdēng yòu zhuǎn.* Turn right at the third traffic light.
红绿灯右转。 *Hónglǜdēng yòu zhuǎn.* Turn right at the traffic light.	前面左转，然后右转。 *Qiánmiàn zuǒ zhuǎn, ránhòu yòu zhuǎn.* Turn left up ahead, and then turn right.
左转，再左转，就到了。 *Zuǒzhuǎn, zài zuǒzhuǎn, jiù dàole.* Turn left, then turn left again and you'll be there.	这条路一直走。 *Zhè tiáo lù yīzhí zǒu.* Go straight down this road.
小心开车。 *Xiǎoxīn kāi chē.* Drive safely.	他突然停下来, 好像想起了什么。 *Tā tūrán tíng xiàlái, hǎoxiàng xiǎngqǐ le shénme.* Suddenly he stopped, as if he thought about something.

就停在这儿。

Jiù tíng zài zhèr.

Just stop right here.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 就 (*jiù*)
就这儿右拐。
jiù zhèr yòu guǎi.
"Just here turn right."

So far we've talked about quite a few adverbs in Chinese to describe the degree of actions or status such as 很，太，真 (*hěn, tài, zhēn*), etc. Today we introduce another common adverb, 就 (*jiù*), which has several usages in different circumstances. The first usage is to help stress what the speaker wants to express, sometimes to show the speaker's determination or strong idea to do something. Such as in our dialogue, 就这儿右拐 (*jiù zhèr yòu guǎi*), 就 (*jiù*) here doesn't have a specific meaning other than emphasizing that "it's here, right here to turn right." Note in this situation, the speaker usually puts on a stronger tone when pronouncing this character. Often used in spoken language, some example sentences are:

1. 我就找你。
   Wǒ jiù zhǎo nǐ.
   "I am looking for you." ("You are the one I am looking for.")
2. 就是你的错。
   Jiùshì nǐ de cuò.
   "It is just your fault (not mine)."
3. 我就不去。
   Wǒ jiù bù qù.
   "I am just not going (No one can make me go)."
4. 我就不给你。
   Wǒ jiù bù gěi nǐ.
   "I am just not giving it to you."

Another common function of 就 is to emphasize the limitation or constriction of something or action in a sentence. It sometimes can be translated as "only."

For Example:

1. 我就有三本书。
   Wǒ jiù yǒu sān běn shū.
   "I only have three books."
2. 就剩我一个人了。
   Jiù shèng wǒ yī ge rén le.
   "I am the only person left here."
3. 我就睡了十分钟。
   Wǒ jiù shuì le shí fēnzhōng.
   "I only slept for ten minutes."

4. 他就会炒鸡蛋。
   Tā jiù huì chǎo jīdàn.
   "He can only do the fried eggs."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Car Congestion

Unlike in Hong Kong and Macau, in mainland China, traffic drives on the right-hand side of the road. The traffic in many Chinese cities is becoming increasingly congested which is not entirely surprising when you consider the number of cars being sold in China. Beijing alone now adds nearly nineteen hundred cars to its roads every day. It is said by 2020 China will have 140 million private cars, even more than the United States. It is quite rare for visitors in China to rent cars as drivers require a Chinese driving license to be able to rent and drive a car. Renting a taxi or hiring a driver for the day (or longer) is comparatively cheap so many visitors use these instead.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #22
Be entertained in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#22

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 还有票吗？
2. 有。要几张？
3. 三张。
4. 就剩两张了。

ENGLISH

1. A : Are there any more tickets?
2. B : Yes. How many do you need ?
3. A : Three.
4. B : Only two left.

PINYIN

1. Hái yǒu piào ma?
2. Yǒu. Yào jǐ zhāng?
3. Sān zhāng.
4. Jiù shèng liǎng zhāng le.

TRADITIONAL

1. 還有票嗎？
2. 有。要幾張？
3. 三張。
4. 就剩兩張了。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
票	票	piào	ticket	noun
张	張	zhāng	measure word	measure word
电影票	電影票	diànyǐngpiào	movie ticket	noun
火车票	火車票	huǒchēpiào	train ticket	noun
飞机票	飛機票	fēijīpiào	plane ticket	noun
门票	門票	ménpiào	entry ticket	noun
剩	剩	shèng	to have left	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我的票在这儿。 *Wǒ de piào zài zhèr.* My ticket is here.	一张票多少钱？ *Yī zhāng piào duōshǎo qián?* How much is one ticket?
电影票好贵！ *Diànyǐng piào hǎo guì!* Movie tickets are so expensive!	我要两张火车票。 *Wǒ yào liǎng zhāng huǒchē piào.* I want two train tickets.
飞机票越来越贵。 *Fēijī piào yuè lái yuè guì.* Plane tickets are getting more and more expensive.	今天不要门票。 *Jīntiān bùyào ménpiào.* Free entry today.
没有剩票了。 *Méiyǒu shèng piào le.* There are no tickets left.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Measure Words
三张。
Sān zhāng.
"Three."

In today's grammar we are going to give you a short summary on Chinese measure words. As you probably already know, measure words are used between numeric words and nouns. And for different categories of nouns there are over a hundred measure words to match with. Today, we are going to talk about some of the most commonly used ones.

1. To count people, we use 个 (*ge*). This is also the "joker card" to use when you need a measure word to fill in the conversation, Such as 办公室有三个人 (*bàngōngshì yǒu sān gèrén*). When it comes to someone with a specific title such as 先生，女士 (*xiānsheng, nǚshì*), the appropriate measure word should be 位 (*wèi*), as in, 一位先生，一位女士 (*yī wèi xiānsheng, yī wèi nǚshì*).
2. For animals, we generally use 只 (*zhī*).Sometimes with large animals such as elephants, lions, bulls, cows, or pigs, we use 头 (*tóu*), such as, 一头大象 (*yī tóu dàxiàng*). The exception is horses. We use 匹 (*pǐ*), such as, 两匹马 (*liǎng pǐ mǎ*).
3. For flat and thin objects such as paper or tickets, we use 张 (*zhāng*), such as in our dialogue, 三张票 (*sān zhāng piào*). Note we also use this measure word when it comes to tables, any kind of tables as in 一张桌子 (*yī zhāng zhuōzi*).
4. For tools we can hold with our hands such knifes, spoons, or heavier ones such as brooms or axes, we use 把 (*bǎ*), as in, 一把椅子 (*yībǎyǐzi*).
5. For long and thin objects such as pens, we use 支 (*zhī*). A more colloquial measure word is 根 (*gēn*). It's often used to count things like needles, toothpicks, hair, even bananas.
6. For pieces of clothes, the measure word is 件. However, for lower pieces or long items such as trousers and dresses, we use 条 (*tiáo*), as in, 一条裤子 (*yī tiáo kùzi*).
7. For items in a pair such as socks and shoes, we use 双, or more colloquially, 对儿 (*duìér*). For example, 他们是一对儿 (*tāmen shì yī duìér*), meaning, "They are a couple."
8. For electrical goods or machineries, we use 台 (*tái*), as in, 一台电脑 (*yī tái diànnǎo*).

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Nightlife Options

Nightlife entertainment options have multiplied greatly over the last ten years or so. Most Chinese cities contain a plethora of KTV karaoke joints, fancy restaurants, noisy night-clubs, western-style bars, and coffee shops. There has also been a growth in cinemas, usually as a part of a larger shopping mall. These show a mixture of Chinese and foreign films though the number of foreign films officially released in China is limited to twenty a year and usually comprises the big blockbusters and a mixture of obscure and often forgettable fare from Hollywood or around the world. The Chinese films quite often include English subtitles though the foreign films are sometimes dubbed into Chinese, so be careful when buying your tickets. I had the bizarre experience of watching Jackie Chan's spoken English being overdubbed with another actor's Chinese translation when watching one of his recent American movies. Theatre is also experiencing a huge growth in everything from revolutionary operas, ballet, translations of Western classics, and modern experimental theatre available in the bigger cities. Traditional Chinese opera is still available though is not popular with many younger Chinese. You can still find some traditional performance often with an audience full of sunflower seed munching octogenarians, though there are also some entertaining but tacky performances mostly laid on for tourists. Many cities, especially Beijing, have a fantastic live music scene with local and overseas bands while classical music is huge in China with most of the big names from around the world regularly visiting Beijing and Shanghai. All these nightlife options have created several ticket agencies who can deliver tickets to you and to the inevitable ticket touts usually found outside venues trying to sell tickets (occasionally for much less than the asking price though, so be wary of fake tickets).

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #23
A visit to the Chinese hospital

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#23

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 大夫，我不舒服。
2. 哪儿不舒服？
3. 哪儿都不舒服。
4. 怎么人人都这么说？

ENGLISH

1. A : Doctor, I don't feel well.
2. B : Where is it that you are not feeling well?
3. A : Everywhere.
4. B : Why does everyone say the same thing?

PINYIN

1. Dàifu, wǒ bù shūfu.
2. Nǎr bù shūfu?
3. Nǎr dōu bù shūfu.
4. Zěnme rénrén dōu zhème shuō?

TRADITIONAL

1. 大夫，我不舒服。
2. 哪兒不舒服？
3. 哪兒都不舒服。
4. 怎麼人人都這麼說？

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
大夫	大夫	dàifu	doctor	noun
医院	醫院	yīyuàn	hospital	noun
医生	醫生	yīshēng	doctor (formal)	noun
护士	護士	hùshì	nurse	noun
舒服	舒服	shūfu	comfortable	adjective
怎么	怎麼	zěnme	how come	question pronoun
人人	人人	rénrén	everyone	noun
难受	難受	nánshòu	feeling unwell/uncomfortable	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你应该听大夫的。 *Nǐ yīnggāi tīng dàifu de.* You should listen to the doctor.	我要去医院。 *Wǒ yào qù yīyuàn.* I am going to the hospital.
她老公是医生。 *Tā lǎogōng shì yīshēng.* Her husband is a doctor.	护士长 *hùshìzhǎng* head nurse
女护士 *nǚ hùshi* female nurse	男护士 *nán hùshì* male nurse
护士和病人在一起的时间比和医生在一起的时间长。 *Hùshì hé bìngrén zài yìqǐ de shíjiān bǐ hé yīshēng zài yìqǐ de shíjiān cháng* The nurse spends more time with the patient than the doctor.	护士和病人在一起的时间比医生和病人在一起的时间长。 *Hùshì hé bìngrén zài yìqǐ de shíjiān bǐ yīshēng hé bìngrén zài yìqǐ de shíjiān cháng.* The nurse spends more time with patients than the doctor does.
校医务室的护士正在给学生做检查。 *Xiào yīwùshì de hùshì zhèngzài gěi xuésheng zuò jiǎnchá.* The nurse at the school infirmary is examining the student.	这个女人是一名护士。 *Zhège nǚrén shì yì míng hùshì.* The woman is a nurse.
我太太不是护士。 *Wǒ tàitai bù shì hùshi.* My wife is not a nurse.	我肚子不太舒服。 *Wǒ dùzi bùtàishūfú.* My stomach is not very comfortable.

怎么回事？ *Zěnme huí shì?* What's the matter?	人人都同意。 *Rénrén dōu tóngyì.* Everyone agreed.

他现在很难受。

Tā xiànzài hěn nánshòu.

He is feeling really uncomfortable now.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Usage of 人人 (Referring to Everyone)
怎么人人都这么说？
Zěnme rénrén dōu zhème shuō?
"Why does everyone say the same thing?"

Today's grammar point is simple yet important and useful. Taking the example from our dialogue, after the word 人 (*rén*) is duplicated to 人人 (*rénrén*), the subject becomes "everyone," which is the same as 每个人 (*měi ge rén*). There are a few words in Chinese having the same characteristic such as 天，月，年，分，秒 (*tiān, yuè, nián, fēn, miǎo*), when duplicated by itself, the meaning becomes "every day, every month, every year, every minute, or every second." As you can see, these are all time related words. They are used as time adverbs in sentences to emphasize the repetitive nature of certain action.

For Example:

1. 他天天给她打电话。
   Tā tiāntiān gěi tā dǎ diànhuà.
   "He calls her on the phone every day."
2. 我月月给妈妈寄钱。
   Wǒ yuè yuè gěi māma jì qián.
   "I send money to my mum every month."
3. 他年年都回家过年。
   Tā niánnián dōu huíjiā guònián.
   "He goes back home every Chinese New Year."

Another category of words having this characteristic are some of the measure words such as 个，回，次，件. Note that not all measure words can be used this way. These words are used as adverbs to emphasize the whole group having the same quality.

For Example:

1. 苹果个个都很大。
   Píngguǒ gègè dōu hěn dà.
   "All of the apples are big."
2. 他回回都迟到。
   Tā huí huí dōu chídào.
   "He is late every time."

3. 件件衣服都很漂亮。
   Jiàn jiàn yīfu dōu hěn piàoliang.
   "All the clothes are pretty."

4. 他次次都是第一。
   Tā cì cì dōu shì dì yī.
   "Every time he came out first."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

No Complaining in China

In Chinese culture, pain is often accepted as part of suffering and something to be endured (stoicism). A Chinese patient may not actively complain about or express any pain they are feeling. Traditional Chinese medical practices such as acupuncture may be used to alleviate pain. To describe emotional pain, there is a Chinese idiom, *chi ku*, which literally means, "to eat bitterness." This refers to the ability and, at times, necessity of Chinese people to endure difficult and painful times without complaint. Given the political and cultural upheavals of the last hundred years in Chinese history, there has been a lot of *chi ku* amongst the Chinese people.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #24

Find out whether the weather is good in Chinese

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#24

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 今天天气怎么样？
2. 挺好的。
3. 冷不冷？
4. 不冷，挺暖和的！

ENGLISH

1. A : What is the weather like today?
2. B : Pretty good.
3. A : Cold?
4. B : No, pretty warm.

PINYIN

1. Jīntiān tiānqì zěnmeyàng?
2. Tǐng hǎo de.
3. Lěng bu lěng?
4. Bù lěng, tǐng nuǎnhuo de!

TRADITIONAL

1. 今天天氣怎麼樣？
2. 挺好的。
3. 冷不冷？
4. 不冷，挺暖和的！

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
天气	天氣	tiānqì	weather	noun
冷	冷	lěng	cold	adjective
凉快	涼快	liángkuài	cool	adjective
挺	挺	tǐng	very	adverb
晴	晴	qíng	sunny	adjective
暖和	暖和	nuánhuo	warm	adjective
气温	氣溫	qìwēn	air temperature	noun
阴	陰	yīn	overcast	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

今天天气太好了。 *Jīntiān tiānqì tài hǎo le.* The weather today is so nice.	昨天真冷。 *Zuótiān zhēn lěng.* It was really cold yesterday.
现在凉快了。 *Xiànzài liángkuai le.* It feels cool now.	这样挺好的。 *Zhèyàng tǐng hǎo de.* It's pretty good like this.
天气预报说明天上午多云，下午晴。 *Tiānqì yùbào shuō míngtiān shàngwǔ duōyún, xiàwǔ qíng.* The weather forecast for tomorrow is cloudy in the morning but sunny in the afternoon.	明天是个大晴天。 *Míngtiān shì ge dà qíngtiān.* It's going to be bright and sunny tomorrow.
你的手真暖和。 *Nǐ de shǒu zhēn nuǎnhuo.* Your hands are really warm.	今天晚上气温很低。 *Jīntiān wǎnshàng qìwēn hěn dī.* Tonight's temperature is really low.
这天真阴。 *Zhè tiān zhēn yīn.* It's really overcast today.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 挺 + adjective + 的
挺好的。
Tǐng hǎo de.
"It's pretty good."

Today we are encountered by yet another degree adverb, 挺 (*tǐng*). Like others such as 很，真，太 (*hěn, zhēn, tài*), 挺 (*tǐng*) goes before the adjective to modify the degree of the adjectives. However, always remember to put the particle 的 (*de*) to form the pattern 挺 + adjective + 的 when using it. In addition, we often use 挺 (*tǐng*) in colloquial situations to express the speaker's content or less intensive feelings. For example, in our dialogue, the sentence 挺暖和的 (*tǐng nuǎnhuo de*) means, "It's pretty warm." Here are some other examples.

For Example:

1. 这个节目挺好看的。
   Zhège jiémù tǐng hǎo kàn de.
   "This show is pretty good."
2. 今天挺冷的。
   Jīntiān tǐng lěng de.
   "Today is pretty cold."
3. 这床挺舒服的。
   Zhè chuáng tǐng shūfú de.
   "This bed is pretty comfortable."
4. 这个手机挺好用的。
   Zhège shǒujī tǐng hǎo yòng de.
   "This cell phone is pretty functional."
5. 那只猫挺可爱的。
   Nà zhǐ māo tǐng kě ài de.
   "That cat is pretty cute."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Climate Control

The climate in China varies greatly from the tropical, humid weather found in the south, to the dry, freezing weather in the north. China is notable for being one of the only countries to have attempted "weather modification" to prevent rains and storms during important national events. Rumor has it that Chinese scientists have seeded clouds with chemicals to encourage or postpone rainfall to ensure blue skies during the Olympics and the 60th anniversary of the Communist Party. It is not known how often this happens or the long term effects on the environment.

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #25
Get the party started in China

CONTENTS

- Dialogue - Chinese
  - Simplified
  - English
  - Pinyin
  - Traditional
- Vocabulary
- Sample sentences
- Grammar
- Cultural insight

#25

DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. 派对真热闹！
2. 喝饮料吗？
3. 有鸡尾酒吗？
4. 没有。来杯葡萄酒吧。

ENGLISH

1. A : The party is so lively.
2. B : Like a drink?
3. A : Got any cocktails?
4. B : No. How about a glass of wine?

PINYIN

1. Pàiduìzhēn rènao!
2. Hē yǐnliào ma?
3. Yǒu jīwěijiǔ ma?
4. Méiyǒu. Lái bēi pútáojiǔ ba.

TRADITIONAL

1. 派對真熱鬧！
2. 喝飲料嗎？
3. 有雞尾酒嗎？
4. 沒有。來杯葡萄酒吧。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
热闹	熱鬧	rènao	lively	adjective
派对	派對	pàiduì	party	noun
饮料	飲料	yǐnliào	drink	noun
鸡尾酒	雞尾酒	jīwěijiǔ	cocktail	noun
请柬	請柬	qǐngjiǎn	invitation	noun
葡萄酒	葡萄酒	pútaojiǔ	wine	noun
小吃	小吃	xiǎochī	snack	noun
啤酒	啤酒	píjiǔ	beer	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

这儿真热闹。 *Zhèr zhēn rènao.* It's so lively here.	你来我的派对吗？ *Nǐ lái wǒ de pàiduì ma?* Are you coming to my party?
你想喝什么饮料？ *Nǐ xiǎng hē shénme yǐnliào?* What would you like to drink?	我很喜欢喝鸡尾酒。 *Wǒ hěn xǐhuān hē jīwěijiǔ.* I like cocktails a lot.
收到请柬了吗？ *Shōudào qǐngjiǎn le ma?* Have you received the invitation?	多买几瓶葡萄酒。 *Duō mǎi jǐ píng pútáojiǔ.* Buy a few more bottles of wine.
你想吃小吃吗？ *Nǐ xiǎng chī xiǎochī ma?* Do you want some snacks?	女人准备了小吃。 *Nǚrén zhǔnbèile xiǎochī.* The woman prepared a snack.
青岛啤酒在国外很有名。 *Qīngdǎo píjiǔ zài guówài hěn yǒumíng.* Tsingtao Beer is famous overseas.	来瓶啤酒。 *Lái píng píjiǔ.* I'll have a bottle of beer.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Particle 吧 (*ba*)
来杯葡萄酒吧。
Lái bēi pútáojiǔ ba.
"How about a glass of wine?"

There are a group of particles in Chinese and although carrying no specific meaning, they help to give indications of the speaker's feelings or intentions in different situations. For example, in this dialogue, first we have 吗 (*ma*). It is commonly used at the end of an interrogative sentence as a question marker. Most of you may already know how to use it. Next we have 吧 (*ba*) in 来杯葡萄酒吧 (*lái bēi pútáojiǔ ba*). This is a particle typically used in situations where the speaker is giving suggestions or requests, particularly in imperative sentence.

For Example:

1. 让我去吧。
   Ràng wǒ qù ba.
   "(Please) let me go."
2. 你告诉他吧。
   Nǐ gàosu tā ba.
   "(How about) you tell him."
3. 快说吧。
   Kuài shuō ba.
   "Hurry up and say it."

Sometimes 吧 (*ba*) can also be used in question sentences. However, compared to 吗 (*ma*) type question sentences where the speaker is genuinely seeking answers from the listeners, 吧 (*ba*) question sentences show the speaker is more confident with the answer to the question, therefore he is simply seeking agreement from the listener. It's like to add "isn't it" at the end of an English sentence. In this case, there are often adverbs such as 一定，应该，大概 (*yīdìng, yīnggāi, dàgài*) etc. appearing in the sentence.

For Example:

1. 你应该认识他吧。
   Nǐ yīnggāi rènshi tā ba.
   "You should know him, don't you."
2. 他大概不会晚吧。
   Tā dàgài bùhuì wǎn ba.
   "He probably wouldn't won't be late, would he."
3. 电影院里人特多吧。
   Diànyǐngyuàn lǐ rén tèduōba.
   "There were many people in the cinema, weren't there."
4. 这袜子是你的吧。
   Zhè wàzi shì nǐ de ba.
   "This pair of socks is yours, isn't it."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Alcohol

Alcohol has been made and drunk in China for over seven thousand years. For most of this time, the main form has been varieties of *bai jiu*, which literally translates as "white liquor or wine" and is usually made from sorghum, wheat, or rice. It is very strong and few foreigners develop a taste for it but sometimes have to endure a *bai jiu* drinking session as part of a business meeting. It is also a key ingredient of Chinese weddings as the groom is often expected to go around every table at the wedding and toast the guests. This can result in high levels of inebriation which has lead to some grooms who can't hold their drink hiring a guest drinker for the event. These days beer is just as popular as *bai jiu* and is found in almost every restaurant. Beer was introduced to China in the late nineteenth century by Germans and Russians. Today it is nearly always a pale lager though some breweries are beginning to experiment with other types. Grape wine is becoming increasingly popular, both imported and domestically produced. Imported wine is often very expensive and is a sign of the growing affluence of Chinese consumers. It is thought that China will become the world's number one consumer of wine in the next few years. Although Chinese wine doesn't have a great reputation at the moment, it is rapidly improving especially the brands from Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang and are likely to take off in the near future.