

Elementary Chinese I

Elementary Chinese I

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

PART I
INTRODUCTION: THE
BASICS OF CHINESE

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

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

I. Tones

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

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



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



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



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

2. Simple Finals and Initials

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

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

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



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



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here: <https://openbooks.lib.msu.edu/chs101/?p=124#oembed-2>

3. Compound Finals and Nasal Finals

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

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

Watch the video below and learn how to pronounce them:



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

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

Watch the video below and learn to pronounce them:



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4. Chinese Characters

Brief Introduction:

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













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

Character Composition:

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

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

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

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

Radicals:




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

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

Here is a table that lists commonly used radicals:
<https://www.mandarin tutor.com/resources/commonradicals>

Basic Strokes:

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

Strokes	Pinyin Names	English	Example Characters
	diǎn	dot	冰
	héng	horizontal	王
	shù	vertical	干
	pié	Downward left	八
	nà	Downward right	人
	tí	Upward	冰
	shù gōu	Vertical hook	水
	wǎn gōu	Slanted hook	代
	héng gōu	Horizontal hook	头
	héng zhé	Horizontal bend	口
	shù zhé	Vertical bend	凶

Stroke Order:

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

There are seven basic stroke order rules to follow. Please check them out at <http://blog.tutorming.com/mandarin-chinese-learning-tips/7-basic-rules-to-chinese-stroke-order>

PART II

LESSON I: FIRST CONTACT

Learning Objectives:

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

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

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

Dialogue:

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

Li Xiaopeng: 您好！我姓李，请问您贵姓？

Wang Gui: 你好！我姓王。

Li Xiaopeng: 王先生，您叫什么？

Wang Gui: 我叫王贵。李小姐，你呢？

Li Xiaopeng: 我叫李小朋。很高兴认识您！

Wang Gui: 很高兴认识你！



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Vocabulary:

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

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



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Grammar Notes:

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

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

3. How to use 贵姓 (guì xìng):

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

4. Requesting politely with 请问 (qǐng wèn):

In Chinese, the character 请 (similar to “please” in English) is used before verbs to indicate “politeness”. The structure is “请 + verb”. For example, 请听。(Please listen.) In this dialogue, the phrase 请问 (qǐngwèn) is a set expression meaning not “please ask”, but “may I ask?”. It often occurs before a question to make polite requests for information. For instance, 请问您贵姓? (May I ask what your surname is?) In this sentence, 您贵姓 is the question that asks for surname, and 请问 is put before it to indicate that the speaker is being polite.

5. Chinese pronouns:

The basic personal pronouns are:

我(wǒ): I, me

你(nǐ): you

他, 她, 它(tā): he/him, she/her, it

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

我们(wǒ men): we/us

你们(nǐ men): you (plural)

他们, 她们, 它们(tā men): they/them

6. The verb 叫(jiào, to be called):

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

7. Questions with 什么(shén me, what):

The question word 什么 can be used either as a modifier as in

什么名字 (shénme míngzi, what name) or as a pronoun as in 你叫什么, literally “you are called what?”, meaning “what is your name?”.

8. Questions with 呢 (ne):

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

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

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

10. Word order of the Chinese question:

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

Subject	verb	object
我	叫	Joyce.
wǒ	jiào	Joyce.
I	am called	Joyce.
change to the second person	unchanged	change to the question word
↓	↓	↓
你	叫	什么名字?
nǐ	jiào	shén me míng zi?
You	are called	what name?

Culture Notes:

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

Chinese also shake hands in formal situations, but the handshake tends to be lighter and longer than the Western handshake. In addition, always avoid bone-crunching handshakes, bear-hug greetings, kissing, and vigorous slaps on the back. Note: In China, always greet those who are older than you first. When you are introduced to a Chinese person, if you are seated, stand up from your seat to show your respect.

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

Dialogue:

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

王老师：你们好！你们是老师吗？

王贵：我不是老师，是学生。她也是学生。您呢？

王老师：我是老师。我姓王。

王贵：王老师好！您是中文老师吗？

王老师：是。你是哪儿人？

王贵：我是北京人。

王老师：她也是北京人吗？

王贵：不是。她不是中国人。

王老师：那她是哪国人？

王贵：她是美国人。

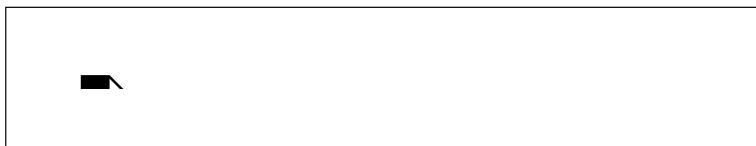
王老师：她说中文吗？

王贵：不说，她说英文。

王老师：她想学中文吗？

王贵：想。

王老师：好，我教她。





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Vocabulary:

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





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Grammar Notes:

1. Question particle 吗 (ma):

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

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

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

2. The adverb 不 (bù , no, not):

As an adverb, it is normally put before a verb or an adjective to negate them. For example, 不姓李 or 不好。 Note that 不 “>bù is pronounced bú in front of a syllable carrying a fourth tone. So 不是 is pronounced bú shì.

3. The verb 是 (shì):

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

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

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

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

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

是。 Shì. Yes.

4. The adverb 也 (yě):

也 is used before verbs, meaning “too” or “also” (Note: in a negative sentence, 也 means “either” or “neither”). The sentence structure is “**Subject** + 也 + **Verb**“. For example, 我也姓李。(My last name is also Li.) Here are two common mistakes to avoid: unlike the English word “too” and “also,” the Chinese word “也” cannot be put before the subject or at the very end of a sentence.

5. Questions with 哪 (nǎ):

哪 is a question word, meaning “which”. 哪国人 literally “which country people” is used to ask about a person’s nationality.

6. The question word 哪儿 :

哪儿 means “where”. The sentence “你是哪儿人”, literally meaning “you are where person”, is often used to ask where a person is from.

7. The adverb 那 (nà) :

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

8. The verb 想 (xiǎng):

This verb is often followed by another verb, indicating “desire or would like to do something”. For example, 我想学中文, meaning “I desire to learn Chinese”.

Culture Notes:

1. Besides using 你是哪儿人 and 你是哪国人, Chinese people also use 你从哪里来 (nǐ cóng nǎ lǐ lái, lit. “you from where come”,

meaning “where are you from”) to inquire about origins. Possible responses would be “我从 place 来”. For example, if you want to say “I am from New York”, the Chinese statement would be “我从纽约(niǔ yuē, New York)来” or simply “我是纽约人。”

2. The names of countries are often but not always formed by using a syllable that resembles the country’s name in its own language followed by 国 (guó, meaning “country”). For example,

英国 yīng guó England
德国 dé guó Germany
法国 fǎ guó France
美国 měi guó United States of America

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

意大利 yì dà lì Italy
澳大利亚 ào dà lì yà Australia
加拿大 jiā ná dà Canada
墨西哥 mò xī gē, Mexico

Some common place names you should know are:

北京 běi jīng Beijing
上海 shàng hǎi Shanghai
香港 xiāng gǎng Hong Kong
伦敦 lún dūn London
华盛顿 huá shèng dùn Washington
纽约 niǔ yuē New York
巴黎 bā lí Paris
柏林 bó lín Berlin
旧金山 jù jīn shān San Francisco

3. The terms for languages are usually formed by replacing the character 国 in the country name with the character 文 when referring to the written language, and with the character 语 when referring to the spoken language. For example, 中文 is formed by replacing “国” in the word “中国” with “文”. It is the

same with 英文。

PART III

LESSON 2: FAMILY
MEMBERS AND
OCCUPATIONS

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

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

7. Lesson 2 Dialogue 1: Talking About a Photo

Narration:

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



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Vocabulary:

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



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Supplementary Vocabulary Words:

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

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

爸爸 : bà ba, father (n.)

妈妈 : mā ma, mother (n.)

姐姐 : jiě jie, elder sister (n.)

弟弟 : dì di, younger brother (n.)

妹妹 : mèi mei, younger sister (n.)

先生 : xiānsheng, husband (n.)

太太 : tàitai, wife (n.)

女儿 : nǚ ér, daughter (n.)

儿子 : ér zi, son (n.)

Grammar Notes:

1. The question pronoun 谁 (shéi/shuí, who, whom):
This question pronoun can be used as an object, as in the example 他是谁? It can also be used as a subject, as in the sentence 谁是老师?
2. Pronouns 这 (zhè) and 那 (nà):
这 and 那 are used like “this” and “that” in English. For example, 这是什么? What is this?
那是什么? What is that?

那张名片是我的! That name card is mine!

*Note: when followed by nouns or noun phrases, measure words are needed. The structure is 这/那+ **measure word** + **Noun**. For example, “this student” is translated to Chinese “这个学生”.*

3. Measure words:

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

Measure word 个 (gè) : it can be used with most nouns in Chinese, either objects or people. For example, the English phrase “a student” is translated into 一个学生 in Chinese.

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

4. The verb 有 (yǒu):

This character has two meanings:

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

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

5. Possession marker 的(de) :

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

6. The adverb phrase 一下 (yí xià):

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

你介绍一下。You introduce briefly.

我打一下球。I play ball briefly.

Culture Notes:

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

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

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

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

8. Lesson 2 Dialogue 2: Talking About Family Members

Narration:

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



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Vocabulary:

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



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Grammar Notes:

1. The question word 几 (jǐ):
It is used to ask *how many*? Note that it is used when asking about small numbers, usually less than 10. In addition, this word is usually followed by a measure word. Example:
几口人? Jǐ kǒu rén? *How many people?* (Note: in most cases, 个 is used before 人 to describe how many of people. 口 is only used to describe family members.)
2. 两 (liǎng) vs 二 (èr) :
The digit “2” is 二 , used generally in numbers, when counting to ten, telling a phone number, and so on. 两 is used to say there are “two” of something, generally followed by measure words. For example, “two girls” is translated as “两个女孩子” rather than “二个女孩子”.
3. The question phrase 哪个:
It is used to express “which”. For example, “which is your elder sister” is translated into “哪个(人)是你的姐姐” in Chinese.
4. The adverb 没(méi) :

Chinese people use 没 (rather than 不) to negate the verb 有 (yǒu). The structure is “**Subj.** + 没 + 有 + **Obj.**.” For example, 我没有弟弟(I don’t have a little brother.)

5. 做什么工作 is a way to ask about a person’s job or occupation, like “what (job) do you do” in English. To respond to such a question, simply answer with “是 + occupation”. For example, 你做什么工作？我是老师。
6. The adverb 都 (dōu): This word may mean “both” and “all”. It is an adverb, always used before verbs. For example, 我们都是美国人。In this sentence, 都 is used before the verb 是. In addition, Chinese doesn’t have a special pattern like “neither/none” for the negative case. Just add 都 before the negative verbs. For instance, 我们都不是美国人。(Neither/none of us are Americans).

Culture Notes:

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

一 yī one

二 èr two

三 sān three

四 sì four

五 wǔ five

六 liù six

七 qī seven

八 bā eight

九 jiǔ nine

十 shí ten

2. Most Chinese children call their dads 爸爸 (bà ba) or, even

more casually, 爸 (bà), and call their moms 妈妈 (mā ma) or simply 妈 (mā). When referring to both dad and mom casually, they sometimes combine these words and say 爸妈 (bà mā). In northern China, children also call their dad 爹 (diē) and their mom 娘 (niáng) in everyday life. 父亲 (fù qīn, father) and 母亲 (mǔ qīn, mother) are more formal words, used in formal situations.

3. 兄弟姐妹 (xiōng dì jiě mèi , literally elder brother, younger brother, elder sister, younger sister) means “siblings”. The eldest brother is called 大哥, and the eldest sister is 大姐 . The rest are ranked according to their birth order using numerals. For example, the second eldest brother is 二哥, and the third eldest is 三哥. The youngest is 小弟 . Note that Chinese younger siblings normally refer to their elder siblings by their kinship terms rather than their names to show respect.

PART IV

LESSON 3: MY TREAT

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

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

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

Dialogue:

(王贵和李小鹏 are about to leave the classroom.)

王贵：小鹏，你今年多大？

李小朋：二十岁。

王贵：你的生日是哪(一)天？

李小朋：七月十六号。

王贵：七月十六！今天是七月十三号星

期一，你的生日是这个星期四。我那天

晚上没(有)事儿，我请你吃晚饭，怎么

样？

李小朋：谢谢，你人太好了！

王贵：不谢！我们几点见？

李小朋：七点一刻怎么样？

王贵：好。星期五晚上七点一刻见。

李小朋：再见。

王贵：拜拜。



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Vocabulary:

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

Chinese	Pinyin	English
再	zài	adv., again
再见	zài jiàn	v., to see again, Goodbye
拜拜	bāi bai	interjection, bye-bye



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Grammar Notes:

1. 多 (duō, how, to what extent):

It is an adverb, often used before an adjective to ask about the degree or extent of something. The structure is “**Subj.** + 多 + **Adj. ?**”, meaning “How [adjective] is [subject]?”

In this dialogue, the question phrase 多大 (duō dà) is used to ask “how old”. Another example is 多高, which is used to ask “how tall or high”. There is another way to ask “how old” in Chinese, i.e., 几岁 (jǐ suì); however, it is most often used for children less than 10 years old.

2. Chinese numbers 1-100:

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

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

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

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

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

100 is 一百 (yī bǎi) in Chinese.

3. 岁 (suì, years old):

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

4. Month names:

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

5. Days of the month:

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

6. Year:

The way to say years in Chinese is also easy: “**Number + 年**”

(nián)". For example, to indicate the year 1987, we say “一九八七年(yī jiǔ bā qī nián)". Note that the numbers are pronounced one at a time.

7. Days of the week:

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

8. Structure of dates:

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

9. 我请你吃晚饭(wǒ qǐng nǐ chī wǎn fàn) :

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

10. 怎么样(zěnmeyàng):

It is a question phrase, used to ask *how something is*, or *what it is like*. The structure is “**Subj.** + 怎么样?”. For example, 你的工作怎么样? meaning “how is your work”.

11. 太(tài, too):

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

那太贵了。(That is too expensive).

你太好了!(You are so nice!)

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

她太美了！（She is excessively pretty.）

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

你的哥哥不太帅。她不太美。

12. How to tell time in Chinese?

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

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

To express “half hour,” we use the word半(bàn, half). The structure is “**number** + 点半“. For example, “12:30” is 十二点半.

The structure to tell minutes is: “**number** + 分(fēn - minutes)”. For example, “13 minutes” is 十三分.

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

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

13. Placement of time words in Chinese:

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

今天我很忙 and 我今天很忙 are both correct.

Culture Notes:

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

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

2. You may have noticed that in the vocabulary list, there is a word 事(儿). In northern China, people like to add -er sound (儿) to certain syllables in spoken Chinese, as in 事儿 shìr (“thing”), 哪儿 nǎr (“where”), 一点儿 yìdiǎnr (“a little”), and 好玩儿 (hǎo wánr, “fun”). However, people in the South prefer not to add the -er sound. They would say the four examples listed above without 儿, namely 事 shì, 哪 nǎ, 一点 yì diǎn, 好玩 hǎo wán.

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

Dialogue:

(高先生和白小姐是男女朋友。)

白小姐：高先生，你爱不爱我？

高先生：爱！

白小姐：那明天晚上请我和我妹妹吃饭，好不好？

高先生：为什么不？

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

高先生：好！那我请你，还请她。

白小姐：你太好了！

高先生：你们喜欢吃哪国菜？中国菜还是美国菜？

白小姐：中国菜和美国菜我都喜欢吃，和妹妹不太喜欢。

高先生：那我们吃法国菜，怎么样？

白小姐：那日本菜呢？日本菜不贵。

高先生：那太好了！我妹妹都不喜欢吃日本菜，因为我太饿了。

白小姐：我也饿。你想吃什么？我为你做。

白小姐：我们一起做饭吧！



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Vocabulary:

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



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Grammar Notes:

1. Affirmative-Negative questions:

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

2. The word 请:

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

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

3. Offering choices with 还是 :

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

4. The preposition 为

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

5. The word 吧

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

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

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

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

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

Culture Notes:



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PART V

LESSON 4: HOBBIES

Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

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

II. Lesson 4 Dialogue 1: Talking about hobbies

Dialogue:

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

Xie Tian: 你有什么**爱好**?

Zhou Yiwei: 我**爱好**游泳、画画、看书。你呢?

Xie Tian: 我喜欢学**外语**、玩滑板。你周末常常做什么?

Zhou Yiwei: 有时候工作, 有的时候**看书**。

Xie Tian: 你周末也**工作**吗? 不**看电视**吗?

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

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

Zhou Yiwei: 你**为什么****请**朋友去你男朋友家?

Xie Tian: **因为**他家很大。

Zhou Yiwei: 那你们在他家做什么?

Xie Tian: 我**做饭**, 他们**打游戏**、**跳舞**、**唱歌**、**听音乐**。

Zhou Yiwei: 你的朋友都很喜欢你, 对不对?

Xie Tian: 对呀!

Zhou Yiwei: 我也想跟你做朋友。这个周末我

们一起去看电影，好吗？我请客。
Xie Tian: 好。



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Vocabulary:

Chinese	Pinyin	English
爱好	ài hào	n., hobby; v., to be keen on
周末	zhōu mò	time word, weekend
常常	cháng cháng	adv., often
时候	shí hòu	n., time
有(的)时候	yǒu (de) shí hòu	adv., sometimes
外语	wài yǔ	n., foreign language
玩	wán	v., to play
滑板	huá bǎn	n., skateboard
游泳	yóu yǒng	n., swimming; v., to swim
画画	huà huà	n., painting/drawing; v., to paint/draw
同事	tóng shì	n., colleague
书	shū	n., book
电视	diàn shì	n., TV
忙	máng	adj., busy
打	dǎ	v., to hit, to beat, to strike
游戏	yóu xì	n., game
打游戏	dǎ yóu xì	v., gaming
跳	tiào	v., to jump, to dance
舞	wǔ	n., dance
跳舞	tiào wǔ	v., to dance
唱	chàng	v., to sing
歌	gē	n., song

Chinese	Pinyin	English
唱歌	chàng gē	v., to sing
听	tīng	v., to listen
音乐	yīn yuè	n., music
所以	suǒ yī	conj., so/therefore
对	duì	adj., right/correct
呀	ya	interjectory particle to soften a question
去	qù	v., to go
电影	diàn ying	n., movie
请客	qǐng kè	v., to treat someone to a meal



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Grammar Notes:

1. Word order in Chinese:

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

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

他哥哥很高。
我姐姐很白。
你弟弟很帅。

2. Placement of time words in Chinese sentences:

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

3. 去 + action verb:

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

4. Questions with 好吗:

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

5. The verb phrase 请客 (qǐng kè):

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

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

Culture Notes:

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

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

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

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

Dialogue:

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

Wang Dazhong: 你看！那儿有一个美女。你**觉得**怎么样？

Li Meiyong: 在哪里？我看一下。嗯—，**不错**。

Wang Dazhong: 你**认(识)**不认识她？

Li Meiyong: **认识**，她是我的高中同学。

Wang Dazhong: 你**觉得**她这个人怎么样？

Li Meiyong: 她**爱**学习，是一个很有趣的人。你想**认识**她吗？

Wang Dazhong: 想。我想跟她聊一下。

Li Meiyong: 好，我帮你。…… **张小文**！

Zhang Xiaowen: 啊！李美英，是你！老同学，好久不见。

Li Meiyong: 你来一下。

Zhang Xiaowen: 有什么事？

Li Meiyong: 我的好朋友王大中想**认识**你。

Wang Dazhong : 张小姐，你好！我叫王大中，大家都叫我小王。认识你很高兴。

Zhang Xiaowen : 小王，你好！

Wang Dazhong : 张小姐，今天你好漂亮！

Zhang Xiaowen : 哪里！

Li Meiyong : 你们在这儿坐一下吧。我去找别人聊天。



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Vocabulary words:

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



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Grammar Notes:

1. The verb 觉得 (jué dé):

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

我觉得她很漂亮。I think she is pretty.

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

2. The word 哪里:

哪里 is normally used as a question word, equivalent to “where” in English. The structure is “**Subj. + Verb + 哪里?**” 哪里, which is preferred by the Chinese people in the South, can be used to replace 哪儿, which is preferred by the people in the North.

Here are some examples:

你们去哪儿/哪里? Where are you going?

他在哪儿/哪里? Where is he?

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

3. The verb 想 (xiǎng):

This verb is often followed by another verb, indicating “desire or would like to do something”. For example, 我想打球, meaning “I desire to play ball games”.

When followed by a noun or pronoun, it means “to miss”. For example, 我想妈妈, meaning “I miss my mom”.

4. The adverb 好 (hǎo):

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

5. Adjectives used as predicates:

In the two sentences: 她好漂亮 and 你好, the adjectives “漂亮” and “好” function as predicates. In Chinese, when an adjective functions as a predicate, it is not preceded by the verb 是. It is usually modified by adverbs like 很 or 好. When forming a question with an adjective as a predicate, the adverbs are usually omitted. To turn the statement 她好漂亮 into a question, we say 她漂亮吗?

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

In this sentence, the subject 你 is omitted. It often occurs in regular conversational Chinese, if both the listener and the speaker know who the latter refers to. The sentence (你)有什么事 can be understood literally as “have what matter”, meaning “what’s the matter?” or “what is this about?”. It is used when the speaker has an assumption that the listener has something to say, but doesn’t know what that is.

Culture Notes:

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

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

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

PART VI

LESSON 5: EATING AND DRINKING

Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

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

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

Dialogue:

(高亮在美国教书，是一个学校的中文老师，美美是他的女儿。)

(高亮敲门。)

美美：谁呀？

高亮：我，你爸爸。

美美：请进！爸，有事儿吗？

高亮：今天是周末，我不想在家做饭，

请你去饭馆吃饭，怎么样？

美美：太好了！

(他们进了一家中国饭馆。)

Waiter: 请问你们想喝点儿什么？

高亮：你们这儿有没有啤酒？

Waiter: 有。美国啤酒、中国啤酒，我们都有。

高亮：你觉得美国啤酒好喝还是中国啤酒好喝？

Waiter: 两个都不错。

高亮：那我要两瓶中国啤酒。

Waiter: 小姐，你呢？

美美：给我一瓶啤酒吧。

Waiter: 请问你今年多大？

美美：十七岁。

Waiter: 我们这儿的咖啡和茶都不错，你可以喝点儿。

美美：可是我只想喝啤酒。你为什么要我喝茶和咖啡？

Waiter : 因为你还很小，不能喝酒。
高亮 : 对！你喝一杯茶吧！喝咖啡也可以。
美美 : 我想一下。
高亮 : 想什么？
美美 : 今天我想十点半睡觉，所以现在喝咖啡、喝茶都不好。我喝奶吧。



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Vocabulary Words:

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



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Grammar Notes:

1. 点儿 (diǎn ér): It means “a little” or “a bit” and is put before a noun, used in much the same way as these words in English. Chinese people would say “一点儿” or even “点”. They mean the same and can be used as a generic way to soften the tone of a sentence. This can often make things sound more polite or modest. “喝点儿什么” is more polite than “喝什么”. “一点儿” are usually used right before nouns such as 一点儿咖啡，一点儿茶.
2. 好 (hǎo) + verb: The character 好 can be followed by many different verbs to form “好 (hǎo) + verb” combinations, meaning “nice to verb”. For example, 好喝 means “nice to drink” or “delicious”, and 好吃 means “nice to eat” or “tasty”.
3. The adverb 还 (hái): This word is always used before a verb or an adjective, but it has several meanings. We have learned its meaning of “and also, in addition”. For example, 我喜欢唱歌，还喜欢跳舞。(I like singing; in addition, I like dancing.) In this sentence, 还 comes before the verb 喜欢 to connect two clauses 我喜欢唱歌 and 喜欢跳舞. The two clauses connected by “还” share the same subject 我. In this dialogue, 还 in the

sentence 你还很小 means “still,” indicating that the state 小 continues to exist. Another example: 好久不见，你还是这么漂亮。(Long time, no see. You are still so pretty.)

4. The verb 想 (xiǎng) It has multiple meanings. In the sentence 我想一下 (Let me think for a moment), 想 indicates “to think”. In the sentence 今晚我想十点半睡觉, the word 想 is used to express the speaker’s wish or hope for something to occur. In the sentence 现在我不想喝咖啡, the word 想 indicates “want/would like”.
5. Measure words 瓶 (píng) and 杯 (bēi) : The new measure words: 瓶 and 杯 are used between numbers and nouns. 瓶 can be used for water, wine, liquid, etc., meaning “bottle”. For example, 两瓶啤酒 (two bottles of beer). 杯 is used for beverage, including water, tea, coffee, wine, etc., meaning “cup; glass; mug”. For example, 三杯啤酒 means “three glasses of beer”.
6. The modal verb 能 (néng): 能 is often used before verbs to indicate possibility of something happening, It is used in the following two ways: (1) It is used in negative sentences, indicating “not allow” or “forbid”. For example, 你不能喝酒 means “You are not allowed to drink alcohol.” 这儿不能游泳 means “You cannot swim here.” (2) It is used to form polite questions, meaning “would it be possible”. For example, 你能帮我一下吗 means “Would it be possible that you help me?” 老师，我能说英文吗 means “Teacher, may I speak English.”

Culture Notes:

1. Chinese people drink hot water all year around, whether it is winter or summer, day or night. They do not drink cold water from the tap (the majority of tap water in China is not safe for drinking, so it is boiled and then stored in thermoses), and they seldom drink iced water because hot water is believed to have health benefits and helps ward off illnesses. Besides hot water,

tea is also popular among the Chinese because it is an important part of Chinese tradition. Tea is valued not only for its good smell and taste, but also for its perceived health and digestive benefits. Offering the guests a cup of tea is a long-standing tradition, as well as drinking tea before or after a meal. There are many kinds of teas, including green tea, black tea, flower tea, herbal tea, Oolong tea, Jasmine tea, Chrysanthemum tea; the list goes on and on. To learn more about tea history in China, please [watch this video](#).

2. Under the Minors Protection Law of China, the sale of cigarettes or alcohol to minors (“minors” refers to citizens under the age of 18) is prohibited, and business operators shall put up a sign, saying they will not sell cigarettes or alcohol to minors, in a prominent place. If it is hard to tell whether the buyer is an adult or not, he/she shall be required to show his/her identity card. However, this law is NOT strictly enforced due to China’s traditional alcohol culture. China has 4,000 years’ worth of history about liquor drinking and it has become part of the daily life, whether it is when eating dinner at home, celebrating holidays, getting together with friends, spending nights out in cities, or conducting business meetings. Unlike the West’s freestyle way of drinking, the Chinese way is more controlled, ritualized and purposeful. Chinese business people prefer to make business deals with several cups of alcohol. Friends and family members also like to have several rounds of drinks at festivals or during regular social gatherings.

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

Narration:


小天是在中国的一个大学图书馆工作。昨天是他生日，所以他请了八个同事去他家玩儿。张没去，因为他昨天跟女朋友去约会了。小可为我们准备了很好吃菜，有披萨、寿司，还有很多饮料，有白酒、红酒、啤酒。我和小萨们准备水，还有一起聊天、K歌、玩游戏，很好玩儿。我的爸爸和妈妈都睡觉了。



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Vocabulary:

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



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Grammar Notes :

1. The word 好玩:
The adjective 好玩 is formed by putting the adverb 好 before the verb 玩, meaning “nice/pleasant to play with”. This is a way to form adjectives in Chinese, i.e., “好 + verb”. For example, we have learned 好吃、好喝.
2. The particle 了 :
了 is a particle, used after a verb to indicate its completion. In the example 我去了, 了 is used after the verb 去, meaning the action 去 was completed. Note: It is not equal to the past tense in English because the particle 了 can also be used with future tense to indicate an action completed in the future. For example, 明天你去了北京以后回家。
3. The adverb 才:
It is always used before verbs to indicate “as late as...”, “not... until”. For example, we have this sentence from the dialogue: 我两点才回家。 This sentence means “I didn’t come home until 2:00 a.m.”. In this sentence, the word 才 is an adverb, used

before the verb phrase 回家 to indicate “as late as”.

4. The preposition 到

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

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

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

5. The word 别的:

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

Culture Notes:

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

- **Prepare a small gift.** Your Chinese host may tell you not to bring anything. Actually, they’re just being polite. In the Chinese culture, visiting a friend empty-handed is considered impolite. Bringing fruit, chocolates, or souvenir products from your home country would be welcomed.
- **Be on time.** In China, showing up on time is a way to show your appreciation and respect to the host.
- **Greet all people in the house.** Start from the most senior, proceeding down the social scale, or as many as you can see from where you are. A simple “*ni hao*” or “hello” would be okay.
- **Take your shoes off** and change into a pair of home slippers your host provides. Your host would probably tell you it’s okay

to wear your shoes, but it is more polite to take them off.

- Your Chinese friend **might offer to show you around**. Don't look around without informing your friend.

PART VII

LESSON 6: MAKING PHONE CALLS

Learning Objectives:

After this lesson, you will be able to:

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

15. Lesson 6 Dialogue 1: Leaving a message

Dialogue:

(张友生给高大中打电话。)

张友生: 喂, 请问高大中在吗?

室友: 对不起, 他不在。您哪位?

张友生: 我叫张友生, 是高中的同学。
你知道他到哪儿去了吗?

室友: 他到学校去上课了。

张友生: 那他什么时候回来?

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

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

室友: 别客气! 拜拜!



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Vocabulary:

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

Chinese	Pinyin	English
客气	kè qì	adj., polite



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Grammar Notes:

1. The preposition 给 (gěi) :
As a preposition, 给 helps show the *target* of a verb. There are two structures: (1) **Subj. + 给 + Target + Action**; and (2) **Subj. + Action + 给 + Target**. For example, “I called him yesterday” can be translated into either 我昨天给他打了电话 or 我昨天打了电话给他。 However, the first structure is more often used than the second.
2. The modal verb 要 (yào) :
要 has several meanings. (1) It can indicate a future action, particularly a scheduled event or an activity that one is committed to. The negative form is expressed by adding 不 and deleting 要. For example, 今天下午我要考试。 In this

sentence, 考试 is a scheduled event that 我 is committed to. Its negative form is 今天下午我不考试。(2) It can mean “to want, to desire”. For example, 我要吃饭。(I want to eat.)

3. Time expressions with 上/下:

When talking about weeks and months, 上 is used to describe past time and 下 is used to describe future time. For example, 上个星期 (shàng gè xīng qī) means “last week” and 下个星期 (xià gè xīng qī) means “next week”. As you may have guessed by now, 上个月 (shàng gè yuè) means “last month” and 下个月 (xià gè yuè) means “next month”. Guess what the following expressions mean: 上上个星期、这个星期、下下个星期、上上个月, 这个月, 下下个月

4. The conjunction 要是:

“要是... , 就...” is used to mean “if..., then...”. It is often used in colloquial Chinese. For example, 要是你没空, 就别来。(If you are not available, do not come.)

5. The preposition 以后

It is often used to describe the events *after* a specific time. The structure is “Time + 以后...”, indicating that “after Time, something happens”. The only difference is that in Chinese 以后 should be put after the specific time while in English “after” is put before the time. For example, 下午三点以后他回家了。(After 3:00 PM, he went home.) 一个月以后我要去北京。(In one month, I will go to Beijing.)

6. The adverb 别 (bié) :

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

Culture Notes:

When answering a phone call, Chinese people would normally say

喂 (wéi) “hello/hey” or 喂, 你好 (wéi nǐ hǎo) for more formal phone calls.

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

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

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

16. Lesson 6 Dialogue 2: Calling a Friend

Dialogue:

(张学友是一位数学老师。他接了一个电话。)

张杨：喂，是学友吗？

学友：我就是。您哪位？

张杨：我，是爱文。

学友：什么事？

张杨：我想请您帮一下我儿子。

学友：怎么？

张杨：他上小学五年级，但是他不太懂，昨天他在家做数学题，我怎么也弄不明白。请您行吗？

学友：下午两点我得跟同事们在办公室上会，所以不方便。那什么时候有空？

张杨：我五点半下班，六点才到家。你几点下课？

学友：下午四点就下课。要是你觉着我方便的话，我和儿子七点跟你在星巴克见面，好吗？

张杨：没问题。现在我还有一节课，先去上课了。

学友：那你去忙吧，我挂了。



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Vocabulary :

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



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Grammar Notes:

1. The modal verb 得 (děi):

It is often followed by a verb or a verbal phrase, meaning “need to”, “have to”, or “must”. For example, 你得好好学中文。You must study Chinese well.

2. The character 几

We have learned the character before. It is often followed by measure words, used to ask quantity questions, meaning “how many”. For example: 你喝几杯咖啡？(How many cups of coffee do you drink?) 你有几个姐姐？(How many big sisters do you have?)

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

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

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

3. The adverb 就 (jiù):

In this dialogue, it has two meanings:

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

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

4. The verb phrase 见面 (jiàn miàn) :

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

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

5. The sentence 你(去)忙吧 :

This sentence is often used at the end of a conversation, meaning “I won’t bother you. You carry on”.

6. The question expression 怎么了 :

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

A : 明天我不能去你家玩。(I cannot go to your home tomorrow.)

B : 怎么了?(What has happened?)

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

Culture Notes:

1. Telephone numbers in China are organized according to the

Chinese Telephone Code Plan. Land lines and mobile phones follow different systems. Land lines use area codes, with the numbers having a two or three-digit area code followed by a seven or eight-digit inner number. However, mobile phones do not use area codes, and the numbers consist of eleven digits in the format 1XX-XXXX-XXXX, in which the first three digits (13X to 19X) designate the mobile phone service provider. For example, 139-1092-8765 is a complete mobile phone number. When people call Chinese number from overseas, they should dial + country code phone number (e.g. (+86) 139-1092-8765).

2. There are many ways to end a phone call politely. Here are three of them:
 - Apologize, and then end the call: 对不起，我先挂了。(duì bù qǐ, wǒ xiān guà le). Sorry, I'll hang up first.
 - Explain briefly, and then end the call: 我有事儿，先挂了。(wǒ yǒu shì ér, xiān guà le). I have things to do. I'll hang up first.
 - Be considerate: 你忙吧，我们以后再聊。(nǐ máng ba, wǒ mén yǐ hòu zài liáo). You carry on. Let's chat later.

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

PART VIII

LESSON 7: LEARNING
CHINESE

Learning Objectives:

After learning this lesson, you will be able to:

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

17. Lesson 7 Dialogue 1: Learning Chinese is cool

Narration:

我的错平习老但几要说有习
喜事，常功师是难我生一
欢儿所我课常我，们词个下
学，以的。夸不而听，听写
中而我学我我喜且写我写汉
文且觉习的，欢我汉们考字
，我得习中说写写字写试。
觉的中惯文我汉得。。，
得老中文很常的字很怎明我
学师很好常中，慢么天得
中教容，考文因。听我去
文中易天得学为我写们准
是文学天很得写的？上备
一教。预好不汉老就第一
个得。习。错字师是八下
很真和所。有常老课，练
酷不。复以。点常师，练




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Vocabulary:

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



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Grammar Notes:

1. Descriptive complement:
The particle 得 is often used after a verb or an adjective to describe the verb before it, as in the structure: **Verb / Adj. + 得 + Descriptive complement**. For example, 我写得慢。In this sentence, 得慢 is the descriptive complement, used to describe the verb 写. It is similar to the English word “slowly”.
2. The adverb 真 (zhēn):
It is used only in exclamatory sentences and comes before an adjective. For example, 你真好! (“you are truly nice”). In this sentence, 真 is used to modify 好.
3. Ordinal numbers:
Chinese ordinal numbers are formed by adding the prefix 第 (dì) before cardinal numbers, which you can see from 第一 (the first) and 第二 (the second). Note that when adding a noun after a Chinese ordinal numbers, we must add a measure word in between, as in the structure “**第 + Number + Measure Word + Noun**”. For instance, 第一个学生 (the first student).
4. The phrase 有一点儿:

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

Culture Notes:

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

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

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

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

Dialogue:

(老师进了教室。)

老师：上课！

同学们：老师早！

老师：同学们，早上好！

Tom：报告！

老师：Tom，你迟到了。你今天怎么这么晚？怎么现在才来？

Tom：对不起，老师。今天早上我爸妈没叫我，所以我起晚了。

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

同学们：预习了。

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

同学们：懂了。

(听写小测试以后)

老师：下面我们开始学对话，请你们听

一遍录音，再回答我的问题。如果你们想回答问题，请举手。



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Vocabulary:

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



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Grammar Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

2. The adverb 才 :

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

This word is often used with a specific time, as in the

structure: “**Subj.** + **Time** + 才 + **Verb**“. For example, 我今天早上九点才起来。 I got up as late as 9 a.m. this morning.

3. Compare 才 (cái) with 就 (jiù) :

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

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

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

4. Differences between 一点儿 and 有点儿:

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

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

5. The conjunction 以前

This word means “before”. Similar to English, it can be used as either a preposition or a conjunction. However, unlike in English, it is placed after the time phrase or the verb phrase.

When using it in a Chinese sentence, the structure is “Event/Action/Time + 以前, ...”. For example,

睡觉以前, 我看书。(Before going to bed, I read books.)

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

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

6. The particle 了 indicating “change of status”

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

我饿了。

我渴了。

妈妈老了。

她不高兴了。

Culture Notes:

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

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

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

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