



THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO MANDARIN CHINESE

EVERYDAY VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR TO HELP
YOU SURVIVE IN CHINESE (AND THEN SOME!)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Saying Hello and Goodbye

CHAPTER 2

Personal Pronouns and Possessive Pronouns

CHAPTER 3

Introducing Yourself

CHAPTER 4

Numbers 1-100

CHAPTER 5

Measure Words

CHAPTER 6

Asking Questions

CHAPTER 7

Tones

CHAPTER 8

Daily Activities

CHAPTER 9

Helpful Travel Phrases



CHAPTER ONE

SAYING HELLO AND GOODBYE

Hello

Greeting someone in Chinese is as easy as saying **你好 (nǐ hǎo)**. But just as we have many ways of meeting and greeting in English (hello, hi, what's up, etc.), there are many options for saying hello in Chinese:

English	Chinese	Pinyin
Hello (to one person)	你好	nǐ hǎo
Hello (formal)	您好	nín hǎo
Hello (to two people)	你们好	nǐ men hǎo
Hello everyone	大家好	dà jiā hǎo
Hello, teacher	老师好	lǎo shī hǎo
Good morning	早上好	zǎo shàng hǎo
Morning	早	zǎo
Good afternoon	下午好	xià wǔ hǎo
Good evening	晚上好	wǎn shàng hǎo
How are you?	你好吗？	nǐ hǎo ma?
How are you? (formal)	您好吗？	nín hǎo ma?
How are you doing?	你怎么样？	nǐ zěn me yàng?
Long time no see	好久不见	hǎo jiǔ bú jiàn
Very pleased to meet you (very formal)	久仰	jiǔ yǎng
Hello (on phone)	喂	wéi



Practice pronouncing some of the more common greetings with this video on [saying hello in Chinese](#).

Goodbye

The most common way to say goodbye in Chinese is 再见 (zài jiàn), but there are many ways to bid someone farewell depending on the time of day or when you plan to see them next:

English	Chinese	Pinyin
Goodbye	再见	zài jiàn
Bye-bye	拜拜	bài bai
Later!	回头见	huí tóu jiàn
See you later	一会儿见	yí huì er jiàn
See you tomorrow	明天见	míng tiān jiàn
See you next time	下次见	xià cì jiàn
Good night	晚安	wǎn ān
Walk slowly (take care)	慢走	màn zǒu
Bon voyage!	一路平安	yí lù píng'ān
May the wind be with you.	一路顺风	yí lù shùn fēng



Practice pronouncing some of the more common closings with this video on [saying goodbye in Chinese](#).



CHAPTER TWO

PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Chinese seems daunting to most learners at first due to the sheer number of characters and the complexity of tones. But as you progress, you will come to realize that Chinese grammar is not so difficult. One example is personal pronouns.

ENGLISH	CHINESE
I/me	我 – wǒ
You	你 – nǐ
He/him	他 – tā
She/her	她 – tā
It	它 – tā
We/us	我们 – wǒ men
You (plural)	你们 – nǐ men
They/them	他们 – tā men

In Chinese, 我 can be used as “I” or “me.” Whereas with English, you have to be drilled on when to use one and when to use the other, in Chinese you always use 我.

It’s the same with he/him, she/her, and it. For all of these words in English, you simply say “tā” in Chinese. The pinyin and the tone remains the same, while the character changes depending on the subject (他, 她, or 它). That means, for speaking purposes, you only need to remember one syllable!

Finally, simply add 们 to any pronoun to make it plural. Again, you don’t have to worry about nitty gritty detail like when to use “we” and when to use “us.” No matter the situation, you will use 我们.



Practice pronouncing the personal pronouns with this [video](#).

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Putting the personal pronouns to use with a verb is just as simple. For example, with the verb “to be” (是—shì), all you need to know is 是.

ENGLISH	CHINESE
I am	我是 – wǒ shì
You are	你是 – nǐ shì
He is	他是 – tā shì
She is	她是 – tā shì
It is	它是 – tā shì
We are	我们是 – wǒ men shì
You are	你们是 – nǐ men shì
They are	他们是 – tā men shì

Now that you see how simple Chinese can be, let's check out a few examples to see this grammar in action:

我是老师 (wǒ shì lǎoshī) = I am a teacher.

她是学生 (tā shì xué shēng) = She is a student.

你们是朋友 (nǐ men shì péng yǒu) = You (pl) are friends.

As I'm sure you've noticed, in Chinese there is no equivalent for “a.” There's also no word in Chinese for “an” or “the.” For English learners, remembering when and how to use articles can be stressful and complicated. For Chinese learners, this problem is non-existent!

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

You can also build upon the personal pronouns to form the possessive pronouns simply by adding 的—de.

ENGLISH	CHINESE
My/mine	我的 – wǒ de
Yours	你的 – nǐ de
His	他的 – tā de
Hers	她的 – tā de
Its	它的 – tā de
Ours	我们的 – wǒ men de
Yours (pl)	你们的 – nǐ men de
Theirs	他们的 – tā men de

Here are some examples of sentences using possessive pronouns:

我的书 (wǒ de shū) = my book

他的自行车 (tā de zì xíng chē) = his bicycle

他们的妈妈 (tā men de mā mā) = their mother

Instead of having to learn more words as in English, you just attach 的 to a pronoun and you are all set! What a breeze!

Now let's put it all together in some examples:

你是我的老师 (nǐ shì wǒ de lǎo shī) = You are my teacher.

他是我们的朋友 (tā shì wǒ men de péng yǒu) = He is our friend.

他们是你的学生 (tā men shì nǐ de xué shēng) = They are your students.



CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

When learning a new language, one of the first things you need to learn how to do is introduce yourself. It's also a good idea to learn how to ask questions to others so you can get to know them.

Name

Q: What's your name? (你叫什么名字? – nǐ jiào shén me míng zì)

A1: My name is... (我叫... – wǒ jiào...)

A2: My name is... (我的名字是... – wǒ de míng zì shì...)

This is a very common and informal way to ask someone's name. Both answers can be used, but it's probably easier and more common to use the first one. Sometimes, less is more. This is the equivalent of asking someone's first name in English.

Q: What's your surname? (您贵姓? – nín guì xìng)

A: My surname is... (我姓... – wǒ xìng...)

This is a more formal and polite way to ask someone's name. Note the use of 您 as opposed to 你 – it is a more formal way to say “you” in Chinese. Think when you're talking to an elder, a teacher, or someone you should show respect to.

Age

Q: How old are you? (你多大? – nǐ duō dà)

A: I'm... years old. (我... 岁 – wǒ... suì)

To answer this one, just insert the number for your age. As for myself, I'd currently answer, “**I'm 27 years old**” (我二十七岁 – wǒ èr shí qī suì).

Of course, you might not want to ask a lady older than you for her age. It's not such a stigma here in China as it is in Western cultures, but it is catching on a little and some women might not want to answer this one.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

From

Q: Which country are you from? (你是哪国人? – nǐ shì nǎ guó rén)

A: I'm from... (我是... 人 – wǒ shì... rén)

If you're a foreigner in China, this is the most common way someone will ask you where you're from. To answer, simply insert the Chinese name for your country into the phrase “我是... 人.”

For example, I would answer “**I'm American**” (我是美国人 – wǒ shì měi guó rén).

Q: Where are you from? (你是哪里的人 – nǐ shì nǎ lǐ de rén)

A: I'm from... (我是... 的 – wǒ shì... de)

This is the question you can ask a Chinese person to find out where they are from in this massive country. You may hear an answer like, “**I'm a Beijinger**” (我是北京的 – wǒ shì běi jīng de).

Job

Q: What's your job? (你做什么工作? – nǐ zuò shén me gōng zuò)

A: I'm a/an... (我是... – wǒ shì...)

Just learn the Chinese word for your job title and add it to the end of your answer. For example, “**I'm an English teacher**” (我是英语老师 – wǒ shì yīng yǔ lǎo shī).



Want to discuss your job more in depth? Check out this [blog post](#) for more related vocabulary.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

Family

Q: How many people are in your family? (你家有几个人? – nǐ jiā yǒu jǐ gè rén)

A: There are... people in my family. (我家有... 个人 – wǒ jiā yǒu... gè rén)

Just add the number of people into the middle of the sentence. To answer this question, I say, “**There are 9 people in my family**” (我家有九个人 – wǒ jiā yǒu jiǔ gè rén).

Q: Are you married? (你结婚了吗? – nǐ jié hūn le ma)

A: Yes, I’m married. (我结婚了 – wǒ jié hūn le); No, I’m not. (没有 – méi yǒu)

Q: Do you have children? (你有孩子吗? – nǐ yǒu hái zi ma)

A: Yes, I do. (有 – yǒu); No, I don’t. (没有 – méi yǒu)

If you do have kids, you might want to learn a few more words, such as “**son**” (儿子 – ér zi) and “**daughter**” (女儿 – nǚ’ér).



To learn more detailed vocabulary and grammar structures for talking about family, you can read this blog post in Chinese about [family](#).

Hobbies

Q: What are your hobbies? (你的爱好是什么? – nǐ de ài hào shì shén me)

A: My hobbies are... (我的爱好是... – wǒ de ài hào shì...)



Of course there are tons of words you could learn on the topic of hobbies. To help you out more with that one, here’s a blog post about [hobbies](#).



CHAPTER FOUR

NUMBERS 1-100

NUMBERS 1-20

Number	Chinese Character	Pinyin
0	零	Líng
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
11	十一	Shí yī
12	十二	Shí èr
13	十三	Shí sān
14	十四	Shí sì
15	十五	Shí wǔ
16	十六	Shí liù
17	十七	Shí qī
18	十八	Shí bā
19	十九	Shí jiǔ
20	二十	Èr shí



Practice pronouncing these numbers with our video on [Chinese Numbers 1-20](#).

NUMBERS 21-60

21	二十一	Èr shí yī	41	四十一	Sì shí yī
22	二十二	Èr shí èr	42	四十二	Sì shí èr
23	二十三	Èr shí sān	43	四十三	Sì shí sān
24	二十四	Èr shí sì	44	四十四	Sì shí sì
25	二十五	Èr shí wǔ	45	四十五	Sì shí wǔ
26	二十六	Èr shí liù	46	四十六	Sì shí liù
27	二十七	Èr shí qī	47	四十七	Sì shí qī
28	二十八	Èr shí bā	48	四十八	Sì shí bā
29	二十九	Èr shí jiǔ	49	四十九	Sì shí jiǔ
30	三十	Sān shí	50	五十	Wǔ shí
31	三十一	Sān shí yī	51	五十一	Wǔ shí yī
32	三十二	Sān shí èr	52	五十二	Wǔ shí èr
33	三十三	Sān shí sān	53	五十三	Wǔ shí sān
34	三十四	Sān shí sì	54	五十四	Wǔ shí sì
35	三十五	Sān shí wǔ	55	五十五	Wǔ shí wǔ
36	三十六	Sān shí liù	56	五十六	Wǔ shí liù
37	三十七	Sān shí qī	57	五十七	Wǔ shí qī
38	三十八	Sān shí bā	58	五十八	Wǔ shí bā
39	三十九	Sān shí jiǔ	59	五十九	Wǔ shí jiǔ
40	四十	Sì shí	60	六十	Liù shí

NUMBERS 61–100

61	六十一	Liù shí yī	81	八十一	Bā shí yī
62	六十二	Liù shí èr	82	八十二	Bā shí èr
63	六十三	Liù shí sān	83	八十三	Bā shí sān
64	六十四	Liù shí sì	84	八十四	Bā shí sì
65	六十五	Liù shí wǔ	85	八十五	Bā shí wǔ
66	六十六	Liù shí liù	86	八十六	Bā shí liù
67	六十七	Liù shí qī	87	八十七	Bā shí qī
68	六十八	Liù shí bā	88	八十八	Bā shí bā
69	六十九	Liù shí jiǔ	89	八十九	Bā shí jiǔ
70	七十	Qī shí	90	九十	Jiǔ shí
71	七十一	Qī shí yī	91	九十一	Jiǔ shí yī
72	七十二	Qī shí èr	92	九十二	Jiǔ shí èr
73	七十三	Qī shí sān	93	九十三	Jiǔ shí sān
74	七十四	Qī shí sì	94	九十四	Jiǔ shí sì
75	七十五	Qī shí wǔ	95	九十五	Jiǔ shí wǔ
76	七十六	Qī shí liù	96	九十六	Jiǔ shí liù
77	七十七	Qī shí qī	97	九十七	Jiǔ shí qī
78	七十八	Qī shí bā	98	九十八	Jiǔ shí bā
79	七十九	Qī shí jiǔ	99	九十九	Jiǔ shí jiǔ
80	八十	Bā shí	100	一百	Yì bǎi

HAND SIGNALS

When learning how to count in Chinese, it's also useful to learn the hand signals for the numbers 1-10. Obviously, 1-5 are pretty much the same as anywhere, but China has a unique way of counting from 6-10:





CHAPTER FIVE

MEASURE WORDS

MEASURE WORDS

There are numerous measure words in Chinese, as every Chinese noun requires a measure word. English also uses measure words (such as a *cup* of tea or two *pairs* of pants), but not with every nouns.

Different measure words are used for different nouns, and there are certain rules that you should learn in order to help you master this aspect of Chinese. We can't cover them all in this eBook, but to help you get started a bit, here are ten crucial Chinese measure words that you must learn:

1. 个 – gè

When you're a total Chinese beginner, this measure word will save your life. It can basically be used for everything, and Chinese people will forgive you for only knowing one all-encompassing measure word. It *should* be used for people and/or non-specific items, but you can basically use it all the time. Here are a few examples:

Three foreigners (三个老外 – sān gè lǎo wài)

That beautiful girl (那个美女 – nà gè měi nǚ)

Ten students (十个学生 – shí gè xué shēng)

2. 只 – zhī

If 个 is the go-to measure word for people, then 只 is used for animals. Strangely enough, it's also used for arms, hands, legs, and feet – body parts that come in pairs. Here's this common measure word in action:

This dog (这只狗 – zhè zhī gǒu)

Two hands (两只手 – liǎng zhī shǒu)

Five cats (五只猫 – wǔ zhī māo)



For a quick intro to Chinese measure words, check out this [grammar video](#).

MEASURE WORDS

3. 条 – tiáo

The best way to remember how to use this important measure word is that it is often connected with long, narrow, or skinny objects – fish, roads, pants, rivers, and so on. Check these examples:

Ten fish (十条鱼 – shí tiáo yú)

This river (这条河 – zhè tiáo hé)

Two pairs of pants (两条裤子 – liǎng tiáo kù zi)

4. 双 – shuāng

This is the Chinese equivalent of “pair” in English. Here are a few examples:

A pair of chopsticks (一双筷子 – yī shuāng kuài zi)

That pair of shoes (那双鞋 – nà shuāng xié)

Two pairs of gloves (两双手套 – liǎng shuāng shǒu tàò)

5. 辆 – liàng

This measure word is used for vehicles with wheels, but not trains. You can use it to talk about cars, bikes, and the like, though. Let's see it in action:

Three bicycles (三辆自行车 – sān liàng zì xíng chē)

Five cars (五辆车 – wǔ liàng chē)

This electric bikes (这辆电动车 – zhè liàng diàn dòng chē)

6. 张 – zhāng

It's pretty easy remembering how to use this measure word, as it is attached to flat objects – tables, paper, tickets, etc. You'll find that you use this one quite often if you live in China, as you'll always be buying subway, bus, or train tickets.

One soft sleeper ticket (一张硬卧票 – yī zhāng yìng wò piào)

Three tables (三张桌子 – sān zhāng zhuō zi)

Five bus tickets (五张车票 – wǔ zhāng chē piào)

MEASURE WORDS

7. 本 – běn

While you use 张 for a single sheet of paper, you need to use a different measure word when talking about things like books, magazines, or notebooks. That's where 本 comes in handy! Here are some examples:

This newspaper (这本报纸 – zhè běn bào zhǐ)

Ten books (十本书 – shí běn shū)

One magazine (一本杂志 – yī běn zá zhì)

8. 家 – jiā

This is a very versatile Chinese character – it can mean “home” or “family,” and it can also be used as a measure word. In this context, it is attached to gatherings of people, or establishments (shops, restaurants, etc.), such as:

This company (这家公司 – zhè jiā gōng sī)

Four restaurants (四家饭店 – sì jiā fàn diàn)

A bar (一家酒吧 – yī jiā jiǔ bā)

9. 瓶 – píng; 杯 – bēi

We're going to put these two measure words together and relate them to the last example, as these are both very handy in a bar/restaurant. The first (瓶) means “bottle,” and the second (杯) means “glass.” This way you can distinguish between “a bottle of beer” and “a glass of wine.”

A bottle of beer (一瓶啤酒 – yī píng pí jiǔ)

A glass of red wine (一杯红酒 – yī bēi hóng jiǔ)

That bottle of water (那瓶水 – nà píng shuǐ)

10. 件 – jiàn

This measure word can be used with clothing, gifts, or matters/problems.

This shirt (这件衬衫 – zhè jiàn chèn shān)

One matter/thing/problem (一件事 – yī jiàn shì)

Three gifts (三件礼物 – sān jiàn lǐ wù)



CHAPTER SIX

ASKING QUESTIONS

ASKING QUESTIONS

Learning how to ask questions is a critical part of studying Chinese. Let's begin with the six question words, and an example of each:

English	Chinese	Pinyin
Who	谁	shuí
What	什么	shén me
Where	哪／哪里	nǎ/nǎ lǐ
When	什么时候	shén me shí hou
Why	为什么	wèi shén me
How	怎么	zěn me

What would you like to eat? 你想吃什么？ nǐ xiǎng chī shén me

Where is the bathroom? 卫生间在哪？ wèi sheng jiān zài nǎ

When are we leaving? 我们什么时候走？ wǒ men shén me shí hou zǒu

Why did you come to China? 你为什么来中国？ nǐ wèi shén me lái zhōng guó

How can I get to the subway station? 怎么去地铁站？ zěn me qù dì tiě zhàn



Want to hear these question words pronounced and see them in action? Check out this video on [forming questions](#) in Chinese.

ASKING QUESTIONS

The Chinese language lacks a direct translation of the words “yes” and “no.” This causes a lot of confusion amongst foreigners studying the language. It’s also the source of a lot of cultural misunderstandings for people traveling or living in the country.

In Chinese, conveying affirmative or negative actions is carried out by the verb of the sentence. That is to say, in Chinese, answering in the affirmative or negative is reliant upon whether there is a negative qualifier with the verb. These negative qualifiers are often 不 (bú) in the present tense or 没 (méi) in the past tense.

For example, if someone asks me:

你去过上海吗? – Nǐ qù guò shàng hǎi ma? – Have you been to Shanghai?

I can respond:

我去过 – Wǒ qù guò – I have been.

我没去过 – Wǒ méi qù guò – I have not been.*

*Note that past tense negative qualifier 没 .

Let’s look at a few more examples:

你会说中文吗? – Nǐ huì shuō zhōng wén ma? – Can you speak Chinese?

我会说中文 – Wǒ huì shuō zhōng wén – I can speak Chinese.

我不会说中文 – Wǒ bú huì shuō zhōng wén – I can’t speak Chinese.*

*Note that the negative response uses the present tense negative qualifier 不 (bú).

你吃饭了吗? – Nǐ chī fàn le ma? – Have you eaten?

我吃了 – Wǒ chī le – I’ve eaten

我没吃 – Wǒ méi chī – I have not eaten

你有问题吗? – Nǐ yǒu wèn tí ma? – Do you have a question?

有 – yǒu – have

没有 – méi yǒu – don’t have

OR

我有问题 – Wǒ yǒu wèn tí – I have questions

我没有问题 – Wǒ méi yǒu wèn tí – I don’t have questions



Want to hear these question words pronounced and see them in action? Check out this video on [forming questions](#) in Chinese.

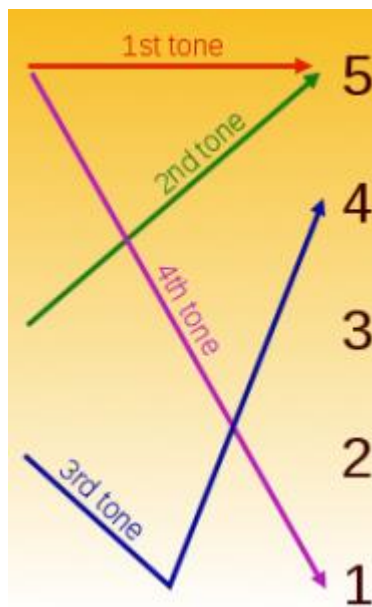


CHAPTER SEVEN

TONES

TONES

For most learners of Chinese, mastering the tones is one of the most difficult and time-consuming aspects of the language. Trying to remember not only words, but the correct intonation as well, often leads to misunderstandings when communicating with native speakers. The rising and falling of your voice can change the meaning of a word very easily – you could end up calling your **mother** (妈妈 – mā ma) a **horse** (马 – mǎ) if you're not careful. Here's a basic crash course on the Chinese tones to help you in your studies:



The 1st Tone (第一声 – dì yì shēng)

For tone #1, your voice starts high and stays that way, kind of like your hippie roommate in college. Do you remember singing do-ray-me-fa-so-la-ti-do in music class? Well, when pronouncing a syllable with the first tone, your voice should sound like it does when you hit that last “do.”

The 2nd Tone (第二声 – dì èr shēng)

On to tone #2. The best way I can relate the second tone to something in English is the way you raise your voice when asking a question. Your voice starts somewhere in the middle, and rises to the top.

TONES

The 3rd Tone (第三声 – dì sān shēng)

This one is by far the most difficult, if you ask me. Your voice needs to start in the middle, drop to the bottom, and then raise back up near the top. When I started out, the third tone was the bane of my existence, and I was constantly screwing it up. It's difficult to relate to English, but it's somewhat akin to the way you would give a very surprised "Whhhhhaatt?!" in response to a shocking statement from a friend. For example, a few years ago, when I told friends I was moving to China, they would often reply as such – "Whhhhaatt?! You're moving to CHINA?!"

The 4th Tone (第四声 – dì sì shēng)

Finally, there is the falling sound of the fourth tone. This one is pretty easy. Your voice starts high and drops all the way down. Basically, you sound like you are angry when using the fourth tone. Pretend like your dog just chewed up your favorite pair of Nikes ("BAD dog!") or flash back to your younger years and your parents scolding you ("You're GROUNDED!"). Harness that anger, and you've got the fourth tone down.



The best way to practice recognizing tones is to hear them, so be sure to check out this [introductory video](#) to the four tones.

The Neutral Tone (轻声 – qīng shēng – lit. gentle voice)

Oh, wait, you thought we were finished? Ha! In Chinese, there is also a neutral tone. When reading pinyin, you can spot this one by the lack of tone identifier. Some common places you will see the neutral tone are at the end of a sentence, when asking a question, or when a syllable is repeated (the second one will have the neutral tone). Just as it implies, your voice should be gentle, with no rising or falling.



Again, you'll want to practice listening to the way the tones sound, so be sure to watch this [video overview](#) of the neutral tone.

Once you've mastered tones, you'll be able to recite this Chinese tongue twister: Mother rides a horse; the horse is slow; mother scolds the horse.

(妈妈骑马, 马慢, 妈妈骂马 – mā mā qí mǎ, mǎ màn, mā mā mà mǎ)



CHAPTER EIGHT

DAILY ACTIVITIES

DAILY ACTIVITIES

In this chapter, we'll back away from grammar and equip you with vocabulary to help you make it through your daily routine in Chinese. First, take a look at the vocab chart below, then explore the example sentences from a day in our bloggers Chinese life.

English	Chinese	Pinyin
Get up	起床	qǐ chuáng
Go to bed	睡觉	shuì jiào
Get dressed	穿上衣服	chuān shàng yī fú
Brush my teeth	刷牙	shuā yá
Eat breakfast	吃早餐	chī zǎo cān
Eat lunch	吃午餐	chī wǔ cān
Eat dinner	吃晚餐	chī wǎn cān
Go to work/class	上班 / 上课	shàng bān/shàng kè
Get off work/finish class	下班 / 下课	xià bān/xià kè
Take a shower	洗澡	xǐ zǎo
Do the dishes	洗碗	xǐ wǎn
Do laundry	洗衣服	xǐ yī fú
Clean the house	打扫房子	dǎ sǎo fang zi
Watch TV	看电视	kàn diàn shì
Do exercise	做运动	zuò yùn dòng
Surf the Internet	上网	shàng wǎng
Make a phone call	打电话	dǎ diàn huà
Chat	聊天	liáo tiān
Listen to music	听音乐	tīng yīn yuè
Go home	回家	huí jiā



Hear this vocabulary and see it in action in this [video diary](#) of a day in our blogger's life in China.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

我早上八点起床, 然后我吃早餐。

wǒ zǎo shàng bā diǎn qǐ chuáng, rán hòu wǒ chī zǎo cān

I get up at 8 o'clock in the morning. Then I eat breakfast.

我喜欢吃鸡蛋, 培根, 和面包。

wǒ xǐ huan chī jī dàn, péi gēn hé miàn bāo

I like to eat eggs, bacon, and bread.

我喝一杯咖啡, 上网。

wǒ hè yì bēi kā fēi, shàng wǎng

然后我刷牙。

rán hòu wǒ shuā yá

Then I brush my teeth.

我十点去健身房锻炼身体。

wǒ shí diǎn qù jiàn shēn fáng duàn liàn shēn tǐ

I go to the gym at 10 o'clock to workout.

我中午吃午餐。

wǒ zhōng wǔ chī wǔ cān

I eat lunch at noon.

我喜欢吃水果, 三明治, 和薯片。

wǒ xǐ huan chī shuǐ guǒ, sān míng zhì hé shǔ piàn

I like to eat fruit, a sandwich, and chips.

吃饭以后我洗碗。

chī fàn yǐ hòu wǒ xǐ wǎn

After lunch I do the dishes.

然后我刮胡子, 洗澡, 梳头发, 洗衣服。

rán hòu wǒ guā hú zi, xǐ zǎo, shū tóu fǎ, xǐ yī fú

Then I shave, take a shower, brush my hair, and do laundry.

我听音乐, 看书, 穿上衣服。

wǒ tīng yīn yuè, kàn shū, chuān shàng yī fú

I listen to music, read a book, and get dressed.

我下午一点上班。

wǒ xià wǔ yì diǎn shàng bān

I go to work at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

下午我有三节课。

xià wǔ wǒ yǒu sān jié kè

I have three classes in the afternoon.

我五点吃晚餐。

wǒ wǔ diǎn chī wǎn cān

I have dinner at 5 o'clock.

吃饭以后, 我去散步。

chī fàn yǐ hòu, wǒ qù sàn bù

After dinner, I go for a walk.

晚上我还有三节课。

wǎn shàng wǒ hái yǒu sān jié kè

I have three more classes in the evening.

我九点下班。

wǒ jiǔ diǎn xià bān

I get off at 9 o'clock.

下班以后, 我跟朋友们一起去酒吧喝酒。

xià bān yǐ hòu, wǒ gēn péng yǒu men yì qǐ qù jiǔ bā hē jiǔ

After work, I go to a bar with friends to have a drink.

到家的时候, 我看电视。

dào jiā de shí hou, wǒ kàn diàn shì

When I get home, I watch TV.

我十二点睡觉。

wǒ shí'èr diǎn shuì jiào

I go to bed at midnight.



CHAPTER NINE

HELPFUL TRAVEL PHRASES

HELPFUL TRAVEL PHRASES

All of the grammar and vocabulary we've covered so far will help those of you in China in the long run, but you'll likely want to know some basic travel phrases to make it through your first few days. Here are some helpful phrases that cover your basic necessities:

MONEY

How much (does it cost)? – 多少钱 – duō shǎo qián : When traveling in China, and anywhere else for that matter, this is incredibly useful.

Can it be cheaper? – 便宜点吧 – pián yi diǎn ba : When shopping in China, bargaining is a must. Use this phrase to your advantage so you don't get ripped off.

IN A TAXI

Please take me to ____ – 请带我去 ____ – qǐng dài wǒ qù ____ : When you get in a taxi, say this and fill in the blank with your preferred destination.

If you don't have confidence in your ability to pronounce the name correctly, print out the address and say “请带我到这个地址 – qǐng dài wǒ dào zhè ge dì zhǐ”, which means “Please take me to this address.” When cab drivers hear you speak Chinese, they are less likely to rip you off.

Speaking of cab drivers, if you are traveling outside of Beijing, Shanghai, or other big tourist friendly cities, be prepared with this phrase...

Please turn the meter on – 请打表 – qǐng dǎ biǎo : This phrase has proven to be useful on many occasions here for me, as drivers in smaller cities tend to try to take advantage of oblivious 老外.

ASKING DIRECTIONS

Where is ____? – ____ 在哪里 – ____ zài nǎ lǐ : In Chinese, you put the name of the place first, and then ask “at where?”.

How do I get to ____? – ____ 怎么去 – ____ zěn me qù : This goes along with asking for directions, and can be helpful in determining whether to walk, run, bike, swim, or taxi it to your desired destination.

HELPFUL TRAVEL PHRASES

IN A RESTAURANT

What do you recommend? – 你推荐什么菜 – nǐ tuī jiàn shén me cài : If you can't read the menu, use this as your go-to phrase. Sometimes you'll end up with something you love, and sometimes you'll end up with something really funky. If you're in China and you can't really speak Chinese, you are just going to have to deal with this. Don't be a lame foreigner and eat McDonald's every day...

What specialties do you have? – 你们有什么特色菜 – nǐ men yǒu shén me tè sè cài : If you are OK with eating just about everything (like I am), just utter this phrase and take what you are given. In my experience, the specialty dishes in local restaurants are usually amazing. Of course, if you are a pickier eater, you may need to equip yourself with a few more phrases, such as...

I don't eat meat – 我不吃肉 – wǒ bù chī ròu : I hang out with a lot of vegetarian hippies at home, so I think this one is useful as well. If you tell this to your waiter, they will understand and will bring you only veggie dishes.

I like/don't like spicy food – 我喜欢吃辣/我不喜欢吃辣 : wǒ xǐ huan chī là/wǒ bù xǐ huan chī là – As a lot of Chinese food is really spicy, this is pretty important. If you can't take the heat, well, you don't need to get out of the kitchen... Just say this and they will cool it down a bit for you.

In America, we might say things like, "Could I please have...?" or "I would like...". Doing this in China is much simpler: "I want..." (我要 – wǒ yào)

Of course, you need to use measure words. When ordering food, one useful measure word to remember is 份 (fèn). It basically just means "an order/a dish." For example:

"I'd like an order of Kung Pao chicken."--(我要一份宫保鸡丁 : wǒ yào yí fèn gōng bǎo jī dīng)



Want even more useful travel vocabulary? Check out [this video](#).

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