

LESSON NOTES

Introduction to Chinese #5 Basic Bootcamp

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VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
谢谢	謝謝	xièxie	thank you	phrase
对不起	對不起	duìbùqǐ	I'm sorry	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

谢谢你的帮助。 Xièxiè nǐ de bāngzhù. Thanks for your help.	对不起,我很忙。 Duìbùqǐ, wǒ hěn máng. Sorry, I'm very busy.
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GRAMMAR

Basic Bootcamp

In this lesson, we'll focus on teaching you the most useful Chinese words and phrases for absolute beginners!

Expressing Thanks and Forgiveness

The best phrase to learn when studying a new language is one that expresses gratitude and appreciation. If you had to learn only a single phrase, this would be it!

We taught you this phrase in the first lesson of this series.

1. 谢谢。
xièxie
"Thank you."

In lesson 2, we mentioned the pronunciation of the consonant x: it sounds like "sh," only with flatter lips. Then we have the compound vowels, *ie*. The tone in the first syllable is fourth falling tone: *xiè*.

And the second syllable is neutral tone: *xié*.

You can see the radical in this character 谢 is 讠. This indicates that the meaning of this character has something to do with speech.

The next phrase we'll teach you is perhaps the second most useful phrase of all. It's **to apologize or to excuse** yourself:

1. 对不起。
duìbuqǐ
"I'm sorry."

This is a formal way to apologize, for when you did something wrong.

But if you want to interrupt someone and ask a question, we don't often use this phrase. Instead, we use:

1. 请问
qǐngwèn
"May I please ask..."

If you want to get the waiter or **waitress's attention**, in English you might say "excuse me." But in Chinese, you just need to raise your hand and your voice and say:

1. 服务员
fúwùyuán
"waiter" or "waitress"

Don't worry, it won't sound rude. Everyone in China does it. It's the most common way to get a waiter's attention in China.

Where is...?

Asking where something is is an incredibly important and useful phrase to learn. You're going to need this when asking where the bathroom, the train station, or where the hotel is.

1. ...在哪里?
...zài nǎlǐ?

在 means "at." 哪里 means "where."

So the pattern is **[something/location] + 在哪里?**

For example, if you want to ask "Where is the bathroom...":

1. 洗手间在哪里?
Xǐshǒu jiān zài nǎlǐ?

Or for the subway station, you say:

1. 地铁站在哪里?
dì tiě zhàn zài nǎlǐ?

To sound more **polite**, you can add "may I please ask" before the sentence. We mentioned this phrase earlier in this lesson.

1. 请问, 洗手间在哪里?
qǐngwèn, xǐshǒu jiān zài nǎlǐ?
2. 请问, 地铁站在哪里?
qǐngwèn, dì tiě zhàn zài nǎlǐ?

So altogether, the polite way to ask where something is is: 请问, ...在哪里?
qǐngwèn, ...zài nǎlǐ?

If you know the person you're talking to well, you can simply say: ...在哪里? ...zài nǎlǐ?

Here are other common words you may need to learn:

1. 超市
Chāoshì
"supermarket," or "convenience store."
2. 我的座位
Wǒ de yàoshi
"my seat"

You can ask where anything is, simply by saying the place or location and ...在哪里? ...zài nǎlǐ?

Parting Advice - Insider Knowledge

The best way to learn Chinese, particularly if you want to improve your communication skills, is to watch and study contemporary Chinese videos. That's because we often use expressions in daily conversation that aren't necessarily introduced in grammar textbooks.

Even though Mandarin is a common language in China, men and women, elderly people, and children have their own ways of speaking. This means they have their own vocabularies and tones. For example, women use 呢 (ne) at the end of their statements a lot, with the purpose of softening their tones. But if men use that, they would sound very feminine. Make sure you mimic the right person.

Watching contemporary videos, such as our videos here at ChinesePod101, will ensure that you're learning real, applicable Chinese in the fastest and most effective way.

You've reached the end of this course 'Introduction to Chinese.' But it's only the beginning of your journey to Chinese fluency! Where do you go from here? Try our Ultimate Guide to Chinese Pronunciation series where we teach you all the sounds of the Chinese language. Or, check out any of our other video series. We have many different categories for you to choose from.