Ten Chinese phrases to get by

Throwing yourself into social groups

Its amazing how few phrases one has to learn to get by in a foreign country.

Below is a list of xxxxxx phrases (in order of importance) I learnt in my initial weeks of being in China. Without these, I would be lost.

1. Wǒ yào – I want – 我要

I didn’t need to learn hello, please or thank you until much later. As phrases go, being able to ask for something is more important than anything.

1. Wǒ tīng bù dǒng – I don’t understand (literally: I hear, no understand) – 我听不懂

When I am successful in saying something in Mandarin people sometimes assume I can speak fluently. Wǒ tīng bù dǒng is often the phrase I utter when I am met with a new word. People sometimes laugh when I say it. I hope there is some unknown joke hidden in the language and they aren’t laughing at me.

1. Where is the bathroom?

This one came in handy when I was in Lijiang.

1. I don’t know
2. I’m sorry
3. Thank you
4. Hello
5. Please give me