

Basic Chinese

基础篇

Chapter 1 / **Polite words** 礼貌用语

Chapter 2 / **Personal pronouns, possessives, and pinyin** 人称代词、物主代词和拼音

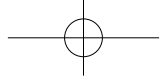
Chapter 3 / **Cardinal numbers** 数字

Chapter 4 / **Dates** 日期

Chapter 5 / **Time** 时间

Chapter 6 / **Basic verbs and negation** 主要动词

Chapter 7 / **Important places** 重要地点



Chapter 1 Polite words 礼貌用语

- Features of the Chinese language
- Chinese grammar

Memory Cards

你好 (nǐ hǎo)

hello

If you want a **NĚ**A
HŌuse, say "hello!"

再见 (zài jiàn)

bye

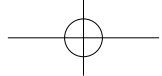
I play the **XŶ**lophone to
say "bye" to **JĚNN**y.

欢迎 (huānyíng)

welcome

Robin **HŌ**od says to
WŌNderwoman "welcome
to **ĒN**gland"!

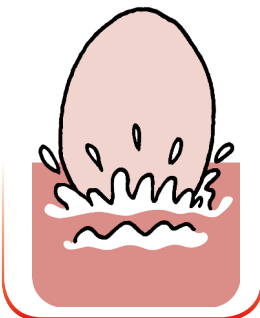




谢谢 (xièxie)

thanks

Thank you dear SÈA for bringing me the Ègg. (Say it again.)



不客气 (bú kèqi)

Don't mention it!

"Thank you!"
"Don't mention it!"
Fortunately the BÓOK
CHIp isn't ruined.



对不起 (duìbuqǐ)

(I am) sorry!

My pet mouse DŪAne says sorry/apologizes for using my BOOts to hide the CHÈEse.



没关系 (méi guānxi)

It doesn't matter!

MÁY was attacked by a GŪAM SEÀ!, to which she replied, "It doesn't matter!"



别担心 (bié dānxīn)

do not worry
don't worry

Mum says, "Don't worry!
Go out all night BÉER
DĀNCÍNG!"

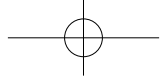


早上好 (zǎoshang hǎo)

good morning

The TZar sent an ŌW! to wish me good morning at my SHÀNGhai HŌUSe.





晚安 (wǎn'ān)

goodnight

WŌnder ĀUNt says **goodnight**.



请原谅 (qǐng yuánliàng)

forgive

While dancing wildly, my pointed **CHĪN** hit **EWÁN** and **LIÀM**, so I said, "Forgive me!"

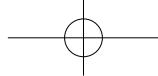


1. Features of the Chinese language

Dear students, now that you know how to say these polite words in Chinese, allow me to give you more details about the Chinese language.

Chinese is spoken by 1.3 billion people, roughly one in five people across the globe. It is a world language, with a simple yet fascinating mechanism.

Written Chinese is not based on an alphabet. Instead, it uses a system of writing based on characters, with each character having its own meaning.



Let's look at an example:

The word “hello” in English is a greeting, but this same word in Chinese is composed of two characters. The first means “you” and the second “good”. Therefore, if we take a logical approach, we understand that these two words are used to greet one person.



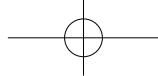
hello = ^{nǐ}你 (you) + ^{hǎo}好 (good) (to greet one person)

To greet more than one person, we need to modify the first word “you” (singular) to “you” (plural) followed by “good”.



hello = ^{nǐ men}你们 ^{hǎo}好 (to greet more than one person)

Take care, however, to note that each character has its own meaning. In modern Chinese, the language we speak today, there are many words that are often composed of two characters. Combining two meanings leads to a new meaning, for example, the word for “crisis” in Chinese is composed of two characters: ^{wēi}危 (crisis, danger) + ^{jī}机 (opportunity).



Here are some important features of the Chinese language:

- 1) Chinese is an analytic language which is structured almost as if you were playing with building blocks. Each character has its very own meaning, and it does not change its form to match tense, mode, number or gender.
- 2) The personal pronoun maintains the same form in all its functions. Therefore, “I” remains as “I”, and never becomes “me”.
- 3) The verb is “fixed”, and it does not conjugate according to the subject or tense. In fact, you will say “I to eat”, “you to eat”, “yesterday to eat”, “tomorrow to eat”.
- 4) There are no real articles (like the, a or an) in Chinese. Therefore, once you have picked up a word, that word stays exactly as it is. You do not have to do anything else to it. It is similar to a building block: it always stays the same. To give it more meaning, all you need to do is to add another “building block” or word.

2. Chinese grammar

The structure of a Chinese sentence is generally made up of three elements.

Subject + Verb + Object

The adjective and the determiner come before the noun, and the adverb before a verb.

A very important feature of the Chinese language is that it is TONAL. I will go on to explain this altogether new and fascinating concept in the next chapter.