

Spoken Chinese Lesson 1: Greetings

https://youtu.be/vtrH_O71dJg

Part 1

Say “你好” to a Stranger

刚开始学汉语的时候，“你好”一定是你学的第一个短语。我们经常对陌生人说“你好”，特别是当你跟别人第一次见面，或者为了引起别人的注意，或者打断别人、请求帮助的时候。

When you start to learn Mandarin, I bet “你好” is the first phrase you’ll learn. Yes, to be polite, we often say “你好” to a stranger, especially when meeting someone for the first time, or to get someone’s attention or interrupt someone for asking for a favor.

Example Dialogues

1.

Nǐ hǎo!

A: 你好!

Hello!

Nǐ hǎo!

B: 你好!

Hello!

2.

Nǐn hǎo!

A: 您好!

Hello!

Nǐn hǎo!

B: 您好!

Hello!

3.

Nǐ hǎo, qǐngwèn xǐshǒujiān zài nǎr?

A: 你好, 请问 洗手间 在哪儿?

Excuse me, where is the bathroom?

Zài nà biān.

B: 在那边。

It's over there.

4.

Wèi?

A: 喂?

Hello?

Nǐ hǎo, qǐngwèn Zhāng xiānsheng zài ma?

B: 你好, 请问 张 先生 在 吗?

Hello, may I speak to Mr. Zhang?

Qǐng děng yíxià.

A: 请 等 一下。

Hold on, please.

Tip

“您”比“你”更有礼貌。为了表示你的尊敬, 你可以对老师, 客户或者长者说“您”。记住, 要用“你好”问候陌生人。

“您” is more polite than “你”. You can use “您” to your teachers, or clients, or seniors, etc to show your respect. Remember that using “你好” to greet a stranger .

Part 2

“Hi” to Someone You Know

在日常汉语里，问候你认识的人，像朋友，同事，邻居，等等，我们一般会问一个显而易见的问题，或者直接地喊一下对方的名字或者职业。

In everyday Chinese, to greet people we know well, such as friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc, we often greet by asking a simple and obvious question, or just simply call someone's name or title.

Example Dialogues

1.

(on the street)

Qù nǎr ya?

A: 去哪儿呀?

Where are you going?

Qù chāoshì.

B: 去 超市。

To the grocery store.

2.

(in the hallway)

Lǐ lǎoshī.

A: 李老师。

Hello, Miss Li.

Èi.

B: 欸。

Hi.

3.

(waiting for the elevator)

Zǎo, Wáng jīnglǐ.

A: 早, 王 经理。

Morning, Manager Zhang.

Zǎo.

B: 早。

Morning.

4.

(in the community)

Āyí.

A: 阿姨。

Hello, auntie.

Qù shàng bān a?

B: 去 上 班 啊?

Going to work?

Ng.

A: 嗯。

Yes.

5.

(on the phone)

Zuìjìn zǎ yàng?

A: 最近 咋 样?

How are you doing recently?

Máng sǐ le.

B: 忙 死了。

Really busy.

6.

(on the phone)

Máng shá ne?

A: 忙 啥 呢?

What's up?

Méi máng shá.

B: 没 忙 啥。

Nothing much.

7.

Zuìjìn zěnmē yàng?

A: 最近 怎么 样?

How's it going?

Yǒu diǎnr lèi.

B: 有 点 儿 累。

A bit tired.

Nǐ zuìjìn zě yàng?

你 最近 咋 样?

How about you?

Hái xíng.

A: 还 行。

I'm OK.

Advice

口语里，我们经常用“咋”这个词，“咋”就是“怎么”的意思。我们还经常使用“啥”来代替“什么”。当一个朋友问你：“最近怎么样”或者“最近咋样”，我们一般不会回答“我很好”。虽然说“我很好”不算错，但是即使我们很好，我们也只是会谦虚地说，“还行”，“还可以”，或者根据自己的情况来开始谈话。

In spoken Chinese, we often use the word , meaning “怎么”. We also use “啥” a lot instead of “什么”. Note that when a friend greets you by saying “最近怎么样” or “最近咋样”, we almost never say “我很好”. Just keep in mind that it's never really WRONG to say “我很好”. Even though we're good, we just humbly say “还行” or “还可以”, or start the conversation directly by talking about our current situation.