COLLOQUIAL CANTONESE

The Complete Course for Beginners

Dana Scott Bourgerie, Keith S. T. Tong, and Gregory James
Colloquial

Cantonese
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Introduction

Cantonese: language or dialect?

The “Chinese language” is extremely diverse, yet the speakers of the different varieties of Chinese do not regard themselves as members of different linguistic communities. All the varieties of Chinese look toward a common “standard” model, fundamentally the linguistic standards of the written language. In modern China, linguistic standards for speech have been based on the pronunciation of the capital, Beijing, and the national language of the People’s Republic of China is called Putonghua, “the common language,” or Mandarin. Cantonese is that variety of Chinese that is spoken in wide areas of the southern coastal provinces of Guangdong (capital Guangzhou, or Canton) and Guangxi (capital Nanning), and in some neighboring places such as Hong Kong and Macao, as well as in numerous places in Southeast Asia outside China proper, such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The latter half of the twentieth century witnessed a great deal of accelerated emigration of Cantonese speakers, notably to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and Cantonese is the dominant form of Chinese spoken in many families of the “chinatowns” of the major cities in these countries. Indeed, in the United States, many of the early Chinese immigrants also trace their ancestry not only to Guangdong Province, but to one particular rural district, Taishan (about ninety kilometers southwest of Guangzhou), whose accessible harbor was used by American ships which came to recruit cheap labor along the Chinese coast in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Traditionally, Cantonese has been considered a “dialect” of Chinese. However, this term is misleading, and tends to have more socio-political
than linguistic significance. Over the four thousand and more years of the history of Chinese, the language has developed in different ways in the various regions of China. In particular, the regional varieties of the language that have emerged have been marked by their individual sound systems. Many of the varieties of modern Chinese are mutually incomprehensible when spoken, yet because of the uniformity of the written characters of the language, communication can often be effected successfully through the medium of writing. The situation, generalized throughout the language, is similar to, say, a Spanish speaker not understanding an English speaker saying the word “five,” yet comprehending fully the written figure “5.”

Some varieties of Chinese—like some varieties of English—enjoy more prestige in the language community than others. Ever since the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), by which time the Pearl River delta had become an important economic and cultural center, the Cantonese of Guangzhou has been an important variety of Chinese, and even the medium for an extensive vernacular literature, including ballads, epic poetry, and some fiction writing. Although these styles are regarded as rustic by purists, their popularity has given rise to the generation of special written forms for Cantonese colloquialisms. Indeed, Cantonese is the only variety of Chinese (besides Mandarin) with widely recognized non-traditional written characters for such colloquial words and expressions. Such “dialect writing” is disapproved of in the People’s Republic of China, but is kept alive in the Cantonese press and other publications in Hong Kong and elsewhere. Many of the non-traditional characters of Cantonese are known throughout China—at least in the urban areas. In the north the use of Cantonese colloquialisms, because of the association of this variety of Chinese with the West, through Hong Kong, adds a touch of exoticism or raciness to one’s speech.

Cantonese is thus more than simply a dialect. It is a regional standard, with a national and an international prestige and currency not enjoyed by any other variety of Chinese, except Mandarin. In spite of the special written characters that have emerged, Cantonese remains essentially a spoken language, with no universally recognized written form. The language has several geographical dialects, distinguished largely by their phonological characteristics, but the “Colloquial Cantonese” used in this book would be accepted by native speakers
as a standard form of the language, as spoken in Hong Kong. Within this standard, there are levels of formality and informality in expression. We have aimed for a neutral style in speech, appropriate to a wide range of social and professional situations. In one or two instances, where the formal–informal distinction is significant, for example where the use of particular words in public broadcasting differs from the corresponding words that would be used in conversation, this has been pointed out.

Cantonese grammar

From several points of view, the grammar of Cantonese is extremely straightforward. Verbs do not conjugate for person or number, nor are there different forms for tense, mood, or voice. Nouns and adjectives do not decline, and have no number, gender, or case. There is no subject-verb or adjective-noun agreement. In short, Cantonese is free of the challenges with which learners of European languages are so familiar.

However, superficial simplicity of form does not mean that there is any less functional capability in the language. One can say in Cantonese anything that one would wish to say in English, or any other language; but the relationships between words and meanings that are made formally in English by, for example, inflection or agreements are expressed in different ways in Cantonese. Word order is especially important, and subject to more rigid regulation than in English. Cantonese also possesses a series of “classifiers,” which identify objects largely by shape, and a rich repertoire of “particles” which are used to express mood, emotion, attitude, etc. There are many multifunctional words, which can act as nouns, adjectives, or verbs, depending upon the context (compare the various functions a word such as “right” has in English); indeed, even the formal distinction between nouns, verbs, and adjectives in Cantonese is often extremely blurred.

The varieties of Chinese show a great deal of syntactic uniformity. Yet there do exist some significant differences amongst them. Cantonese and Mandarin, for example, differ in word order in certain constructions. In Cantonese the direct object precedes the indirect object, whereas the opposite obtains in Mandarin:
Cantonese:  **béi syű ngóh**  
give + book + (to) me  

Mandarin:  **géi wô shû**  
give + (to) me + book.

Certain adverbs (such as **sîn** “first”) which precede the verb in Mandarin follow the verb in Cantonese (as in **heui sîn** “go first” vs. Mandarin **xiăn qù** “first go”). Often the differences are more subtle: a Mandarin sentence pattern in Cantonese will sometimes be understood by native Cantonese speakers, but will nevertheless not be accepted as truly idiomatic. Conversely, colloquial Cantonese has a number of patterns that would not be linguistically acceptable in Mandarin.

**Cantonese vocabulary**

Cantonese, like all varieties of Chinese, is generally considered to be monosyllabic: almost every syllable carries meaning. Although there are many monosyllabic words (words of one syllable), it is by no means true that every word is made up of one syllable: there are many words which are made up of two, or three, syllables, such as:

- **sáubîu**  = “hand”  
  **bû**  = “wristwatch”

- **syutgwaih**  = “snow”  
  **gwaih**  = “cupboard”

- **fêigêichêuhng**  = “airport”

- **láahngheigêi**  = “air conditioner”

Whereas syllables in English are often individually meaningless (e.g. “**syl-la-ble**,” “**car-ries**”), syllables in Cantonese are largely individually meaningful:

- **sáubîu**  = “**sáu**”  
  = “hand”  
  + **bû**  = “**bî u**”  
  = “**watch**”

- **syutgwaih**  = “**syut**”  
  = “**snow**”  
  + **gwaih**  = “**cupboard**”

This is not always the case, and Cantonese has examples of “bound” syllables, which carry meaning or express function only when they occur with other syllables, but these forms are often the result of foreign borrowing:

- **bôlêi**  = “**bû lêî**”  
  = “**glass**”

- **pûihwûih**  = “**pûih wûih**”  
  = “**to linger**”
Neither bō nor lēi nor pūih nor wūih carries any meaning apart from in these combinations. Similar examples in English are “cranberry” or “kith and kin.” The syllables “cran-” and “kith” have no individual meanings—that is, they cannot occur meaningfully alone—but they do have meaning when they occur with “-berry” and “and kin” respectively.

While most Cantonese vocabulary is the same as other varieties of Chinese, in some cases words that are common in everyday Cantonese are seen as archaic and literary in Mandarin, for example:

- mihn face
- hàahng walk
- sihk eat
- wah say

There are also examples where the meanings of words differ or are even reversed in Cantonese and Mandarin. The word for “house” in Cantonese, ūk (Mandarin wū), typically means “room” in Mandarin. Conversely, Cantonese fōhng (Mandarin fáng), that ordinarily means “room” in Cantonese, refers to “house” in Mandarin.

At the same time, in recent history, Cantonese has, because of its socio-cultural contacts, borrowed a large number of words from other languages, especially English:

- jyūgūlik chocolate
- nèihlūhng nylon
- wāihtāmihng vitamin
- wāisihgéi whisky

### The sound system of Cantonese

The romanization adopted in this book, and in Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar, also published by Routledge, is the Yale system, which is a widely used and convenient learning tool. Note, however, that this is not the system generally found in official transliterations of personal and place names, where there has been little standardization over the centuries.

Below we list the various sounds of Cantonese, as they are transcribed in the Yale romanization. Two terms may need explanation:
“aspirated” and “unreleased.” Aspirated consonants are pronounced with a puff of air, as in English “p” in “pan” and “lip.” In some cases, such as, in English, after “s” (“span,” “spill”), the same consonants lose the puff of air and are unaspirated. At the end of a word they may not even be completed: the lips close to form the sound but do not open again to make the sound “explode”; such sounds are termed “unreleased.”

A more elaborate description of the Cantonese phonological system can be found in Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar.

Consonants (CD1; 2)

- **b** resembles the (unaspirated) “p” in “span,” “spill”; to an unaccustomed ear, an initial unaspirated p can often sound like “b” in “bill.”
- **d** resembles the (unaspirated) “t” in “stand,” “still.”
- **g** resembles the (unaspirated) “c” in “scan,” and “k” in “skill.”
- **gw** resembles the “qu” in “squad,” “square.” There is some evidence that this sound is becoming simplified over time, and words transcribed with gw- in this book may actually be heard, in the speech of some native speakers, as beginning with g-. As a learner, you are advised to follow the pronunciation of the transcription.
- **j** an unaspirated sound something between “ts” in “cats” and “tch” in “catch.”
- **p** in initial position resembles the (aspirated) “p” in “pat,” “pin”; in final position, that is, at the end of a syllable, “p” is unreleased.
- **t** in initial position resembles the (aspirated) “t” in “top,” “tin”; in final position, “t” is unreleased.
- **k** in initial position resembles the “k” in “kick,” “kill”; in final position, “k” is unreleased.
- **kw** a strongly aspirated plosive, resembles the “qu” in “quick,” “quill.”
- **ch** resembles the (aspirated) “ch” in “cheese,” “chill.”
- **f** resembles the “f” in “fan,” “scarf.”
- **s** resembles the “s” in “sing,” “sit.”
- **h** (only in initial position in the syllable) resembles the “h” in “how,” “hand.” (Where it appears later in the syllable, “h” is explained under Tone, below.)
Introduction

l resembles the “l” in “like,” “love.”

m resembles the “m” in “man,” “stem.”

n resembles the “n” in “now,” “nice.” There is a widespread tendency, particularly amongst the younger generation of Cantonese speakers, to replace an initial n by l, and there is consequently some variation in pronunciation: many words which are transcribed with an initial letter n in this book may be heard as beginning with l, for instance néih “you,” may be heard as léih. As a learner, you are advised to follow the pronunciation of the transcription.

ng resembles the southern British English pronunciation of “ng” as in “sing” (that is, without pronouncing the “g” separately). This sound occurs only after vowels in English, but in Cantonese it can also occur at the beginning of syllables. However, many native speakers do not pronounce this sound initially. And, just as in English, a final -ng, particularly after the long vowel aa, is often replaced by -n, although this variation does not have the social connotation it has in British English (cf. “runnin’ and jumpin’ ”).

y resembles the “y” in “yes,” “yellow.”

w resembles the “w” in “wish,” “will.”

Vowels (CD1; 3)

a resembles the “u” in the southern British English pronunciation of “but.”

aa resembles the southern British English “a” in “father.” When this sound is not followed by a consonant in the same syllable, the second a of the aa is omitted in writing: fā is pronounced as if it were “faa.”

e resembles the “e” of “ten.”

eu resembles the French “eu” as in “feu,” or the German “ö” as in “schön.” It is pronounced like the “e” of “ten,” but with rounded lips.

i resembles the “ee” of “deep.”

o resembles the “aw” in “saw.”

u resembles the “u” in the southern British English “put.”

yu resembles the French “u” as in “tu,” or the German “ü” as in “Tür.” It is pronounced like the “ee” of “deep,” but with the lips rounded instead of spread.
Diphthongs (CD1; 4)

The diphthongs consist of the vowels in different combinations:

- **ai**  
  a + i, a combination of “a” plus “i,” a very short diphthong, much shorter than the sound of “y” in “my.”

- **aai**  
  aa + i, resembling the “ie” in “lie.”

- **au**  
  a + u, resembling the “ou” in “out.”

- **aau**  
  aa + u, resembling a long “ou” in “ouch!”

- **eui**  
  eu + i, a combination of “eu” plus “i,” something like the hesitation form “er” in English (without the “r” sound) followed by “ee”: “e(r)-ee.”

- **iu**  
  i + u, a combination of “i” plus “u,” something like “yew” in English.

- **oi**  
  o + i, resembling the “oy” in “boy.”

- **ou**  
  o + u, resembling the “oe” in “foe.”

- **ui**  
  u + i, resembling the “ooey” in “phooey.”

Tone (CD1; 11)

Cantonese is a tone language. This means that the same syllable pronounced on different pitches, or with different voice contours, carries different meanings. Consider first an example from English. To agree with someone, you might say simply, “Yes.” The voice tends to fall, from a mid-level to a low pitch. If, however, the answer “Yes” to a question is unexpected, you may repeat it as a question: “Yes?” meaning: “Did you really say ‘yes’?” The voice tends to rise from a mid-level to a high pitch, the span of the rise depending upon the amount of surprise you want to convey. A further example might be the answer “Yes!” as an exclamation, to show surprise or amazement, with the voice tending to fall from a high to a mid-level pitch, again with the span of the fall depending on the intensity of the exclamation. These instances demonstrate that, in English, syllables can be pronounced on different pitches and with different voice contours to express different attitudes. The fundamental meaning of the syllable remains the same; “yes” means “yes” whatever the pitch. However, the variations in pitch indicate whether “yes” is a statement “yes,” a questioning “yes?,” an exclamatory “yes!,” etc. In English the combinations of the sounds in individual words carry the formal meanings...
of the words, that is, what the words *denote*. The pitch, or intonation, variations indicate the speaker’s attitudes or emotions, that is, what the words *connote*.

Another example: if you asked, in English, “What day is it today?” the answer might be “Monday.” Normally, this would be said with the voice falling from mid-level to a lower level. Such an intonation contour indicates a plain statement of fact in English. If the answer were to be given with a rise at the end, it might be interpreted as insecurity on the part of the speaker (“[I’m not sure. Is it] Monday?”), or perhaps not even understood. On the other hand, a strongly stressed first syllable with a high pitch, followed by an unstressed second syllable on a lower pitch (“Monday!”) might indicate the speaker’s surprise at being asked the question at all, perhaps expressing something like “Don’t you know it’s Monday?” The differences in pitch contours indicate differences in the speaker’s attitude, the *connotation* of the answer. However, in Cantonese, a similar question Gāmyaht singkēih géi? “What day is it today?” might be answered Singkēih yāt, with the first syllable high, the second syllable a low fall and the third syllable high. This would mean, “Monday.” With one change, from a relatively high pitch to a lower level pitch on the last syllable, Singkēih yaht, the meaning becomes “Sunday”! The pitch, or tone, variation, indicates a change in the *denotation* of the word: it means something different—in this case, a different day of the week. Every syllable has to be said on a particular pitch for it to carry meaning, and the same syllable said on a different pitch has a different *denotational* meaning.

*Connotation*, which in English is conveyed by pitch variation in the voice, is often indicated in Cantonese by individual syllables, usually particles which occur at the end of the sentence, such as gwa or lō, as in the Cantonese equivalents to the answers discussed above:

Singkēih yāt gwa  = I’m not sure. Is it Monday?
Singkēih yāt lō   = Monday! I’m surprised you asked me.

How many tones are there in Cantonese? Analyses vary: some say six, some seven, some even nine. In this book, we distinguish six tones, not simply because this is the minimum with which to operate comprehensibly and successfully in Cantonese, but because further distinctions actually depend on fine theoretical linguistic arguments.
Native Cantonese speakers appear nowadays to be confining themselves to these six definitive pitch differentiations in their speech, with any minor tonal variations beyond these certainly not being significant from the point of view of someone beginning an acquaintance with the language.

Actual pitch does not matter—everyone’s voice is different in any case—but relative pitch is important. There are three levels of tones: high, mid, and low, and as long as a distinction is made from one level to another, comprehensibility is enhanced.

The mid level is the normal level of one’s voice in conversation, and is the point of reference for the other levels.

The high level is a pitch somewhat higher than the mid level.

The low level is a pitch somewhat lower than the mid level.

Cantonese has words which are distinguished by pitch at each level, such as:

<table>
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<th>word 1</th>
<th>word 2</th>
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<td>mā</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>question particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>mah</td>
<td>to scold</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>sī</td>
<td>poetry</td>
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<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>sī</td>
<td>to try</td>
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<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>sīh</td>
<td>a matter</td>
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</table>

It is important to note the transcription adopted here. A macron (‾) is used to indicate a high-level tone (mā, sī). The absence of any such diacritic indicates a mid-level tone (ma, sī) or a low-level tone (mah, sīh), with the latter having an h following the vowel to indicate the low-level tone. The letter h is pronounced as in “how” or “hand” only when it occurs in initial position in the syllable; elsewhere it is merely a marker of low-level tone, and is not pronounced separately.

In addition to words said on a fixed level—high, mid, or low—there are three tone combinations: two rising, and one falling. For some speakers of Cantonese there is a second falling tone, the high falling, which is merged with the high level in most speakers.

The high rising tone is a rise from mid to high, rather like asking a question on one word in English: “Monday?”

The low rising tone is a rise from low to mid, again like asking a question, but rather suspiciously.

The low falling tone is a fall from mid to low, somewhat like an ordinary statement in English.
Note the transcription: an acute accent mark (´) is used for a rising tone, and a grave accent mark (`) is used for a falling tone. Again, remember that the letter h, when not in initial position, indicates low level.

Look at the following lists of words, in which the pairs are contrasted by tone only. Try to ensure that you make the tonal distinctions between each pair of words. Return to this exercise often, so as to practice these differences—they are important!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>High level</th>
<th>tāu (to steal)</th>
<th>Low falling</th>
<th>tàuh (head)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sing (star)</td>
<td></td>
<td>sihng (city)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tōng (soup)</td>
<td></td>
<td>tòhng (sugar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chīm (to sign)</td>
<td></td>
<td>chihm (to dive under water)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High level</th>
<th>dāng (lamp)</th>
<th>Mid level</th>
<th>dang (chair)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fān (to divide)</td>
<td></td>
<td>fan (to sleep)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jēui (to chase)</td>
<td></td>
<td>jeui (drunk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gām (gold)</td>
<td></td>
<td>gam (to ban)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid level</th>
<th>gin (to see)</th>
<th>Low level</th>
<th>gihn (classifier for clothes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>si (to try)</td>
<td></td>
<td>sih (a matter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>seun (letter)</td>
<td></td>
<td>seuhn (smooth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yim (to loathe)</td>
<td></td>
<td>yihm (to test)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High rising</th>
<th>séui (water)</th>
<th>Mid level</th>
<th>seui (years of age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sāu (hand)</td>
<td></td>
<td>sau (thin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dim (a point)</td>
<td></td>
<td>dim (shop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>séi (to die)</td>
<td></td>
<td>sei (four)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information on tone see Appendix, p. 292.

**Comparison to the Mandarin tone system**

In comparison to Mandarin, the Cantonese tone system is more complex and more closely reflects the system of earlier historical periods of Chinese. Although the tone values differ, there exists a mostly predictable correlation between the tone categories. Note that
coming from Mandarin, one can often only narrow the possibilities to one of two Cantonese tones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first tone (high-level tone)</td>
<td>high level, high falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second tone (high-rising tone)</td>
<td>low falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third tone (dipping tone)</td>
<td>low rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fourth tone (falling tone)</td>
<td>high rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mid level, low level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, note that when a Cantonese word ends with -p, -t, or -k (the historical entering tone or 入聲 category) the correspondence is greatly complicated. In these cases, the table does not predict the correspondence. For example, the mid-level word 白 baak in Cantonese is a second tone (rising) in Mandarin.

Using this book

This book is divided into fifteen units. Each unit has a similar format. At the head of each unit, you will find a short list of the objectives which the unit material aims to help you achieve.

The basic vocabulary of the unit is introduced in the Vocabulary sections. Look through the list of words. Read each item aloud, paying particular attention to the tone of every word. If you have the audio material, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.

The Dialogues are short, realistic exchanges preceded by questions. Read the questions, and then read or listen to each dialogue in order to find the answers to the questions. If you have the audio recordings, listen to the dialogues and answer the questions before reading the texts. It is not necessary to understand every word of the dialogue to be able to answer these questions. At this stage, just concentrate on answering the questions, and do not worry about the rest. As the units progress, material presented in earlier units is recycled, for consolidation.

The Idioms and structures sections give explanations of the idiomatic expressions used in the dialogues, as well as comprehensive usage
notes, covering all the grammatical constructions introduced. Review these sections carefully, referring to the dialogues for the examples of usages.

You will find a series of Exercises to give you practice in using the vocabulary and structures introduced in the unit. You will also find a selection of Communicative activities toward the end of each unit. These are intended as extension exercises to allow you to put your newly acquired language skills into practice with the help of a partner or Cantonese-speaking friend.

Each unit ends with some related Chinese characters for recognition purposes, followed by a Cultural point section to provide a sense of the rich environment in which Cantonese is spoken, especially Hong Kong.

Special conventions of the Yale transcription

1 The tone mark on a diphthong always falls on the first written vowel, e.g. yáuh, móuh, but the tone is a characteristic of the diphthong as a whole.

2 In the syllable ngh, which has no vowel letters, the tone mark is written over the g, but the tone is characteristic of the whole syllable.

3 When aa is not followed by a consonant in the same syllable, the second a is dropped from the written form. Thus, fá, for example, is pronounced as if it were faa.

Conventions used in this book

1 The apostrophe is used to indicate elision of numerals, as in y’ah (the elided form of yih-sahp), sá’ah (the elided form of sāam-sahp), etc. See Unit 5, p. 86.

2 The hyphen is used to indicate:

(a) numbers above ten, e.g. ngh-sahp, sei-baak (see Unit 2, p. 33);
(b) verb-object constructions, e.g. tái-syú, dá-dihnwá (see Unit 3, p. 47);
(c) reduplicated forms of nouns and adjectives, e.g. fèih-féi-déi, gōu-gōu-sau-sau (see Unit 5, p. 80);
(d) comparative adjectives, e.g. fèih-dī, gwai-dī (see Unit 6, pp. 82 and 103);
(e) verbs with special markers, e.g. sihk-jó faahn, cheung-gán gō (see Unit 6, pp. 100 and 137);
(f) days of the week and months, e.g. sīngkèih-yāt, gáu-yuht (see Units 3 and 12, pp. 52 and 194).

3 The negative prefix for verbs, m-, becomes -mh- in choice-type questions (see Unit 1, p. 21), e.g. mhaih/haih-mh-haih, msái/sái-mh-sái. No tone mark is used on m- or -mh-, but the syllable is always pronounced on the low falling tone.

4 The asterisk is used to indicate sentences or structures that are not grammatically correct, but are for illustration only.
Unit One
Gāaujai
Meeting people

In Unit 1 you will learn about:

- introducing yourself and others
- greeting people
- enquiring about someone
- the verbs “to be” and “can”
- forming negative statements
- forming choice-type questions and questions with question-words
- naming conventions, names of countries, languages, and nationalities
Dialogue 1

(CD1; 12)
John and Carmen are at a gathering of the Cantonese Students’ Club, where foreigners learning Cantonese meet and practice their Cantonese. Carmen is talking to Richard.

(a) What country does Carmen come from?
(b) What country does Richard come from?

CARMEN: Néih hóu, ngóh haih Carmen.
RICHARD: Néih hóu, Carmen. Ngóh haih Richard. Carmen, néih haih bǐndouh yàhn a?
CARMEN: Ngóh haih Náusāilàahn yàhn.
RICHARD: O, néih haih Náusāilàahn yàhn.
CARMEN: Gám néih nē, Richard?
RICHARD: Ngóh haih Méihgwok yàhn.

CARMEN: How are you? I am Carmen.
RICHARD: How are you, Carmen? I am Richard. Where are you from?
CARMEN: I am a New Zealander.
RICHARD: Oh, you are a New Zealander.
CARMEN: And how about you, Richard?
RICHARD: I am an American.

Dialogue 2

(CD1; 14)
John is talking to Emily.

(a) Where does John come from?
(b) What languages does he speak?
(c) Where does Emily come from?
(d) What languages does she speak?

JOHN: Néih hóu. Ngóh giujouh John. Néih giu mātyéh méng a?
EMILY: Néih hóu. Ngóh giujouh Emily. Haih nē, John, néih haih-mh-haih Yīnggwok yàhn a?
Unit 1: Meeting people


JOHN: How are you? My name is John. What is your name?
EMILY: How are you? My name is Emily. By the way, John, you are English, right?
JOHN: No, I am Australian. I speak English and German.
EMILY: I am Canadian. I speak English and a little French.

Dialogue 3

(CD1; 16)
Carmen is introducing her friend Grace to John.

(a) Where does Grace come from?
(b) What languages can she speak?

GRACE: Néih hóu, John.
JOHN: Néih hóu, Grace.
CARMEN: Grace haih Yahtbún yáhn. Kéuih sīk gón Yahtmán, Yíngmán tūhng Póutüngwá.
JOHN: Ngóh tūhng Carmen sīk gón síusíu Gwóngdöngwá, bātgwo ngóhdeih msīk gón Póutüngwá. Haih nē, chéhng mahn Grace néih gwai sing a?
GRACE: Ngóh sing Sawada.

CARMEN: Let me make an introduction. This is Grace. This is John.
GRACE: How are you, John?
JOHN: How are you, Grace?
CARMEN: Grace is Japanese. She speaks Japanese, English, and Mandarin.
JOHN: Carmen and I speak a little Cantonese, but not Mandarin. By the way, Grace, what is your surname?
GRACE: My surname is Sawada.
Below is a list of some of the countries in the world. Try reading each item aloud. Practice pronouncing each word, using the audio recording if available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yīnggwok</td>
<td>Britain, the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Méihgwok</td>
<td>the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gānàhdaaih</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oujāu</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Náusāilàahn</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faatgwok</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dākgwok</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yidaaihleih</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāibāanngàh</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fēileuhtbān</td>
<td>the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahtbún</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hōhngwok</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yandouh</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bāgēisītáan</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, we must not forget:

Hēunggóng          Hong Kong
Jūnggwok            China

**Gwok** literally means “country.” Hence Yīnggwok is “Britain,” and Faatgwok is “France,” Dākgwok is “Germany,” etc. The Cantonese names for some other countries are rough phonetic equivalents, for example: Gānàhdaaih for “Canada,” Náusāilàahn for “New Zealand,” Yandouh for “India,” and Bāgēisītáan for “Pakistan.” Sometimes the transliteration is based on the Mandarin readings of the Chinese characters and so is less obvious still.

To refer to the inhabitants of different countries, the word yàhn, which literally means “person(s),” is added to the name of a country. For example, a “Briton” is Yīnggwok yàhn, an “Australian” is Oujāu yàhn, “Indians” are Yandouh yàhn, and “Chinese” are Jūnggwok yàhn.

Now try reading out the list of countries again, but this time for each item add the word yàhn to the name of the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yīngmán</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faatmán</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dākmán</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yidaaihleihmán</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahtmán</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hōhnmán</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mán, wá, and yúh

Mán means “language,” which usually implies both the spoken and written forms. There is another word in Cantonese, wá, which refers only to the spoken form of a language. Thus, for the languages spoken by Filipinos, Indians, and Pakistanis, which Cantonese-speaking people may hear being used but will probably never learn to read or write, wá is used instead. Hence, they use the vague term Fēileuhtbānwá for all languages spoken by Filipinos including Tagalog, Yandouhwá for all languages spoken by Indians, and Bāgēisītāanwá for all languages spoken by Pakistanis.

Lastly, yúh is used for language as well but in a more general and more formal way. Note that with Gwokyúh below you cannot substitute wá or mán for yúh, but for national languages you often can. For example, Faatyúh for Faatmán “French” and Yīngyúh for Yīngmán “English.”

Jūngmán refers to Chinese in general, including written Chinese and a spoken form of it, while wá refers to individual varieties or dialects spoken in different parts of China. Although technically Jūngmán refers to the written form of the language, it is widely used to refer to the language as a whole. Hence:

- Gwóngdūngwá/ Cantonese
- Gwóngjäuwá
- Seuhnghóiwá Shanghainese
- Chiuhjäuuwá The Chiu Chow dialect
- Pōutūngwá Putonghua (lit. “the common language”),
  Standard Mandarin
- Gwokyúh Standard Mandarin (lit. “the national language”)
- Wàh gúh Standard Mandarin (outside of Greater China)

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the dialogues above. The italics items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.
1. **Néih hóu**  
How are you?

2. **Ngóh haih Carmen**  
I am Carmen.

3. **Néih haih bîndouh yâhn a?**  
Where are you from?

4. **Ngóh giujouh John.**  
My name is John.  
(lit. “I am called John.”)

5. **Néih giu mâtéyéh méng a?**  
What is your name?

6. **Gám, néih nê?**  
So, what about you?

7. **Haih nê,**  
By the way,

8. **Néih haih-mh-haih Yînggwok yâhn a?**  
Are you British?

9. **Mhaih.**  
No, I’m not.

10. **Ngóh sîk gông ...**  
I can speak ...

11. **Yîngmán tûhng Dâkmân**  
English and German

12. **sîusiu Faatmân**  
a little French

13. **Dáng ngóh lêih gaaisiuh.**  
Let me introduce you.

14. **Nî go haih Grace.**  
This is Grace.

15. **bâtgwo**  
but

16. **chéhng mahn Grace néih gwai sing a?**  
Grace, may I know what your surname is?

### Greetings (1)

**Néih hóu** is a slightly formal greeting expression, which is used at all times of the day and which can be translated into “How are you?” in English, except that it is not a question and the usual response is the same: **Néih hóu.** In practice, it is more akin to saying “hello.”

### Haih (2)

The verb **haih** is a copula in Cantonese, meaning it is used to equate (A=B). For example, He is Chinese. Note that, unlike the English “to be,” **haih** is not a state verb and is not used with adjectivals. For example, the English “She is tall” is rendered **Kéuih gōu** (lit. “s/he tall”).
Questions with question-words  (3, 5)

Like “wh” questions in English (why, where, who, etc.), many questions in Cantonese are formed with a question-word. However, the question-word in Cantonese is not put at the beginning of the sentence like the question-word in English, but occupies the position taken by the required information in the answer. Thus, the word order in a Cantonese question is essentially the same as that of a statement. For example, to ask where someone is from you use the question-word bǐndouh “where” and say: Néih haih bǐndouh yàhn a?, which literally means “You are where person?” The answer Ngóh haih Náusāilàahn yàhn literally means “I am New Zealand person.” To ask someone their name you use the question-word mātyéh “what” and say: Néih giu mātyéh mèng a?, which means “You are called by what name?,” and the answer Ngóh giujouh Emily means “I am called Emily.”

Nē  (6)

Nē is a final particle used to ask how the topic at hand relates to a certain subject. So if we were discussing what languages people speak, then neih nē? would mean “and what languages do you speak?” Alternatively, if we were asking how people are doing, then Neih nē? would mean “And how are you doing?” or “And you?” Put another way, it is like saying “Regarding the topic at hand, how do you relate to it?”

Choice-type questions  (8)

Néih haih-mh-haih Yinggwok yàhn a? is a “choice-type” question, which is a common structure in Cantonese for “yes/no” questions. The question here literally means “Are you or are you not British?” The positive answer to the question is Ngóh haih Yinggwok yàhn or Haih for short. The negative answer is Ngóh mhaih Yinggwok yàhn or Mhaih for short.

Choice-type questions are formed by reduplicating the verbal form and inserting the negative prefix m- in the middle. (In the romanization used here the m- is written as -mh- in these types of structures.) In the choice-type question Néih haih-mh-haih Yinggwok yàhn a?, the
verb “to be,” haih, is repeated. In the choice-type question Néih sīk-mh-sīk gón Faatmán a?, “Can you speak French?,” the modal verb sīk, “can, know how to,” is repeated.

Negatives

Negatives in Cantonese are often formed by inserting the negative prefix mh before a verb or an adjective. For example, Ngóh haih Jūnggwok yàhn means “I am Chinese” while Ngoh mhaih Jūnggwok yàhn means “I am not Chinese.”

Classifiers for people

Nī wái is an honorific and polite way of referring to a person. Here Nī go haih Grace “this is Grace” would do if Grace is a peer student, for example. Nī wái is more polite than Nī go and as such would be the classifier to persons to whom you want to pay special respect. One normally never uses the classifier wái to refer to oneself, as it is a marker of respect to other people.

Introducing by surname

To ask for someone’s surname, the rather formal expression néih gwai sing a? is used. Sing is a verb, which means “to be surnamed,” while gwai is an adverb meaning “honorable.” So néih gwai sing a? translates into English as “What is your honorable surname?” The respectful expression chéhng mahn further heightens the degree of formality. Note that, because gwai is an honorific form, it is never applied to one’s own surname. Moreover, because gwai sing always refers to others, it becomes by default a question, even without a question particle at the end.

On formal occasions, it is very common for Chinese people to introduce themselves by surname, such as:

Ngóh sing Léih. My (sur)name is Lee.

This situation nearly always would call for a response with a title such as sinsāang “Mr.”

Léih sinsāang, néih hóu. How are you, Mr. Lee?
Alternatively, the word *síu* “small, insignificant” is sometimes added to *sing* when referring to one’s own surname to be especially polite, as in *Ngoh síu sing Léih*. Politeness would also dictate that you would never use *síu sing* when referring to another person. When introducing somebody else on a formal occasion, you may choose to do so on a last-name basis. In such a circumstance you do not use the verb *sing*, but instead introduce the person as Mr. X or Miss X:

*Nǐ wái haih Wòhng síujé.* This is Miss Wong.

---

**Names in Cantonese**

Naming practices in Cantonese are complex, especially in Hong Kong Cantonese. Many, if not most, of the educated and professional classes in Hong Kong take English given names at some point, though they are given Chinese names at birth. It is common to use an English name even when speaking Cantonese. However, certain segments of society (the less educated and older people) are not as likely to use an English name even if they have one. When a person has a Chinese and an English name they will sometimes use both in formal situations such as authorship (for example, Jimmy LÀUH Gwok Sìhng).

Chinese names always take the form of surname first and given name second, though some people reverse that order when speaking English. For example, with the name LÀUH Gwok Sìhng that appears in Unit 4, Dialogue 2, LÀUH is the surname (or family name) and Gwok Sìhng is the given name. Brothers or sisters often share the same first character (in this case, Gwok). Note that using a Chinese person’s given name alone is much more intimate than using an English given name. The functional equivalent of the English given name in Cantonese is the full name (for example, LÀUH Gwok Sìhng).
Chéhng mahn

Chéhng mahn, also pronounced Chíng mahn, is a polite and respectful way of prefacing a question, which can be translated as “Could I ask ... please?” in English, with Chéhng meaning “please” and mahn meaning “ask” by themselves. The expression can be freely added to a question to raise the level of politeness. For example, you can say Chéhng mahn Touhsyugun hai bindouh a? to ask directions to a library or Chéhng mahn néih giu mâtyéh méng a? to ask somebody’s name.

Exercise 1 Comprehension

Read the following questions. Then go back to the three dialogues and find the answers. You can listen to the dialogues again if you have the audio recording.

(a) Who takes the initiative to greet the other person and then introduce himself or herself in Dialogue 1?

(i) Carmen
(ii) Richard

(b) What nationality does Emily presume John to be in Dialogue 2?

(i) English
(ii) Australian
(iii) American

(c) How much French does Emily claim to speak in Dialogue 2?

(i) A lot
(ii) A little
(iii) None

(d) According to Dialogue 3, do John and Carmen speak Putonghua?

(i) Yes, both John and Carmen
(ii) No, neither John nor Carmen
(iii) Only John
(iv) Only Carmen
Exercise 2 Introducing yourself

Imagine you are at a social gathering. Provide the information asked for by completing the following conversation.

STRANGER: Néih hóu. Ngóh giujouh Sam, néih nē?
YOU:
STRANGER: Néih haih bīndouh yàhn a?
YOU:
STRANGER: Ngóh haih Oujāu yàhn. Haih nē, néih sīk-mh-sīk góng Póutūngwá a?
YOU:

Exercise 3 Introducing others

Below is some information about six individuals. Imagine you have to introduce these people to some friends in Cantonese. Practice the language of introduction by yourself. The first one has been done for you. Then try introducing some of your real friends.

(a) Name: Jimmy Walkman
   Nationality: American
   Languages spoken: English, German


(b) Name: Pierre Gagnon
   Nationality: French
   Languages spoken: French, Spanish

Kéuih giujouh Pierre Gagnon ...

(c) Name: Paola Giannini
   Nationality: Italian
   Languages spoken: Italian, French, English

(d) Name: KIM Yoo Sung
   Nationality: Korean
   Languages spoken: Korean, Japanese, English
Exercise 4 Information gathering

Read the two conversations in which four people introduce themselves saying where they come from and what languages they speak. Use the information you extract from the reading or listening to answer the questions that follow. You may find it useful to complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Languages spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) How many different countries do the four people come from?
(b) How many different languages do they speak altogether?
(c) Who speaks the most languages?
(d) Which language is spoken by all four people?
(e) Which languages are spoken by two of the four people?
(f) Which languages are spoken by only one of the four people?
Recognizing Chinese characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Chinese Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briton, British</td>
<td>劃 (Yīnggwok yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>伶 (Yahtbún yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>㱽 (Faatgwok)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>扳 (Hòhngwok)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>人 (Yahtbún yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>人 (Yīnggwok yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>人 (Yahtbún yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>人 (Yīnggwok yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>人 (Yahtbún yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaniard, Spanish</td>
<td>人 (Yīnggwok yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>人 (Yahtbún yàhn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>人 (Yīnggwok yàhn)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The character

人

which appears in each item is pronounced yàhn and means “person,” so a

英國人 (Yīnggwok yàhn)

is a “British person,” and a

日本人 (Yahtbún yàhn)

is a “Japanese person.” The character

國

which appears in the first five items is pronounced gwok and means “country,” and so

法國 (Faatgwok)

is “the country of France” while

韓國 (Hòhngwok)

is “the country of Korea.” The character
is pronounced jău and means “continent,” and

澳州 (Oujău)

means “the continent of Australia.” The remaining ones are all straight transliterations (i.e., the rendering is based on the sound of the source language) of the countries’ names read in English. For example,

意大利

is pronounced Yidaaihlei and represents “Italy.” (Note that the transliteration for Italy comes through the Mandarin Yidali, which is a closer match to the sound.)

Communicative activities

1. Interview a Cantonese-speaking friend or study partner about his or her family and circle of acquaintances. Find out the name of each acquaintance and country of origin.

2. Do you have friends from other countries? If so, use your new language to describe that circle of friends. Where are they from exactly? What languages do they speak?

Cultural point

Chinese maps

See if you can find the names of the countries that you have learned on the following maps.
Map of Asia

Map of Hong Kong
In Unit 2 you will learn about:

- prices in shops
- buying goods by weight or item
- asking for goods and services, and thanking people for them
- terms for payment and change
- personal pronouns
- forming simple statements, and questions with question phrases
Unit 2: Shopping

Dialogue 1

(CD1; 21)
LAM Fong Ling is at a fruit-stall, asking the hawker about prices of fruit.

(a) What fruit did LAM Fong Ling buy?
(b) How many did she buy?
(c) How much did she pay for them?

HAWKER: Hóu leng ge sāanggwó. Máaih dī lā, sīujé.
LAM FONG LING: Dī mōnggwó dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Dī mōnggwó ngh mān yāt go.
LAM FONG LING: Ngóh yiu sei go.
HAWKER: Sei go mōnggwó, yih-sahp mān lā.
LAM FONG LING: Nīdouh yih-sahp mān.
HAWKER: Dōjeh.
LAM FONG LING: Mhgōi.

HAWKER: **Very fresh fruit. Would you like to buy some, Miss?**
LAM FONG LING: **How much for the mangoes?**
HAWKER: **Mangoes are five dollars each.**
LAM FONG LING: **I would like four.**
HAWKER: **Four mangoes, that’s 20 dollars.**
LAM FONG LING: **Here is 20 dollars.**
HAWKER: **Thank you.**
LAM FONG LING: **Thank you.**

Dialogue 2

(CD1; 23)
LAM Fong Ling’s partner, John, is at a fruit-stall, talking to the hawker.

(a) What fruit did John buy?
(b) How many did he buy?
(c) How much did he pay for them?

HAWKER: Sīnsāang, máaih dī sāanggwó lā.
JOHN: Dī cháang géídō chín yāt go a?
HAWKER: Sahp mān sei go.
JOHN: Mhgōi bēi luḥk go ā.
HAWKER: Luḥk go cháang, dōjeh sahp-ngh mān.
JOHN: Nī douh yih-sahp mān.
HAWKER: Jáau fāan ngh mān. Dōjeh.
JOHN: Mhgōi.

HAWKER: Sir, how about some fruit?
JOHN: How much for each orange?
HAWKER: Four for ten dollars.
JOHN: Six please.
HAWKER: Six oranges . . . 15 dollars please.
JOHN: Here is 20 dollars.
HAWKER: Your change is five dollars. Thank you.
JOHN: Thanks.

LAM FONG LING is buying fruit from a hawker.

(a) What fruit did LAM FONG LING buy?
(b) How much did she buy?
(c) How much did she pay for it?

LAM FONG LING: Tāihjí dīm maaḥ a?
HAWKER: Sahp-yih mān yāt bohnɡ.
LAM FONG LING: Jauh yiu yāt bohnɡ lā.
HAWKER: Yāt bohnɡ tāihjī, dōjeh sahp-yih mān lā.

LAM FONG LING: How much for the grapes?
HAWKER: 20 dollars a pound.
LAM FONG LING: I will take one pound then.
HAWKER: One pound of grapes . . . 12 dollars please.
LAM FONG LING: Here is 12 dollars. Thank you.
Vocabulary

Below is a list of the fruit commonly found in a Hong Kong market. The list is followed by the cardinal numbers 1–100. Try reading each item aloud, paying special attention to the tones. Model your pronunciation on the audio recordings if available.

Types of fruit (CD1; 26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fruit</th>
<th>pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sāanggwó</td>
<td>sāanggwó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mōnggwó</td>
<td>mōnggwó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cháang</td>
<td>cháang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pihnggwó</td>
<td>pihnggwó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hēungjīu</td>
<td>hēungjīu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tàihjí</td>
<td>tàihjí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boulām</td>
<td>boulām</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>léi</td>
<td>léi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sāigwā</td>
<td>sāigwā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muhkgwā</td>
<td>muhkgwā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bōlōh</td>
<td>bōlōh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laihjī</td>
<td>laihjī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kēihyihgwó</td>
<td>kēihyihgwó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water-melon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papaya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pineapple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lychee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiwifruit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers (CD1; 27–28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yāt</td>
<td>yih-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yih</td>
<td>yih-sahp yāt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sāam</td>
<td>yih-sahp yih</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sei</td>
<td>yih-sahp sāam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>näch</td>
<td>yih-sahp näch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luhk</td>
<td>yih-sahp luhk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chāt</td>
<td>yih-sahp chāt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baat</td>
<td>yih-sahp baat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gáu</td>
<td>yih-sahp gáu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp</td>
<td>yih-sahp sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-yāt</td>
<td>saam-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-yih</td>
<td>sei-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-sāam</td>
<td>näch-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-sei</td>
<td>luhk-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-nglh</td>
<td>chāt-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-luhk</td>
<td>baat-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-chāt</td>
<td>gáu-sahp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-baat</td>
<td>yāt-baak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-gáu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note that there are two forms of the word “two” in Cantonese. When “two” is used as a nominal number, such as in a room number or telephone number, yih is used. But when it is used as a measure or to indicate quantity, as in “two times” or “two pounds of bananas,” then léuhng is used instead.

### Classifiers and measures

| yāt go cháang | an orange          |
| yāt dā cháang | a dozen oranges   |
| yāt bohng hēungjiū | a pound of bananas |
| yāt mān     | one dollar        |

In Cantonese, a noun is preceded by a classifier or a measure when it is preceded by a number or specifier (nī “this,” or go “that”). For example, bohng is a measure meaning “pound,” so yāt bohng hēungjiū means “one pound of bananas.” (This is the imperial pound, in other words 454 g.) On the other hand, go is the classifier for oranges, so yāt go cháang means “an orange.” There are many classifiers in Cantonese, the choice of which depends mainly on the shape, size, or function of the object referred to. For example, go is used for roundish objects such as oranges and apples, though its use also extends to other “objects” such as “people”—thus yāt go yàhn is “a person.” Tiuh precedes nouns that are perceived as long and narrow in shape, such as gāai “street,” lēngtāai “necktie,” or even lūhng “dragon.” However, other long, narrow things such as pens and other writing implements take the classifier jī, while long things with handles (such as knives, swords, and umbrellas) take the classifier bá. In general, more specific classifiers take precedence over more broad ones. More classifiers will be introduced gradually with the nouns they accompany.

### Idioms and structures (CD1; 29)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.
Unit 2: Shopping

1. **hóu leng ge sāanggwó** very fresh fruit
2. **máaih dí là** please buy some
3. **siujé** Miss (a polite way of addressing a young woman)
4. **dì mōnggwó** the mangoes
5. **dim maaikh a?** what’s the price?
6. **ngh mān yāt go** five dollars each (lit. “five dollars one”)
7. **Ngóh yiu sei go.** I would like four.
8. **Sei go mōnggwó, yih-sahp mān là.** Four mangoes, that’s twenty dollars.
9. **Nī douh yih-sahp mān.** Here’s twenty dollars.
10. **Dōjeh.** Thank you (for the money).
11. **Mhgōi.** Thank you (for the favor).
12. **sīnsāang** Mr. (a polite way of addressing a man)
13. **géidō chín yāt go a?** how much each (lit. “for one”)?
14. **Mhgōi béi luhk go ā.** Please give (me) six.
15. **dōjeh sahp-ngh mān** fifteen dollars, please
16. **Jáau fāan ngh mān.** Here’s five dollars change.
17. **Jauh yiu yāt bohng là.** Then I’ll have one pound.

**Indefinite pronoun dī** (2)

The indefinite pronoun dī functions as a pronoun referring to an unspecified number or amount of people or things. It is invariable, and is usually translated as “some” in English. For example, Dī mōnggwó in Dialogue 1 can mean “some fruit.”

**Particles** (2, 14; 5, 13)

Cantonese has a system of particles, which speakers use to express moods and achieve certain rhetorical functions. The là in the expression máaih dí là is a particle which helps convey the mood of a cordial invitation. On the other hand, the là in Mhgōi béi luhk go ā has a slightly different connotation of giving an affirmation rather than making a cordial invitation. Note that là always occurs at the end of a
sentence, so we refer to it as a sentence-final particle. Other particles are used, for example, in questions and polite requests (see below).

**Definite determiner** (4)

In this context, **dí** functions as a *definite determiner* used before plural or uncountable nouns to specify people or objects. It translates into “the” or “those” (for plural countable nouns) or “that” (for uncountable nouns) in English.

**Questions** (5, 13)

*Dím mäaih a?* is a general question one would use to ask about prices that fluctuate, such as prices of fruit and vegetables in the market, which depend on the quantity and quality of supply and also vary with individual sellers. Another way to ask such a question is to say *Géidô chín yât go a?* Note that both questions contain a question phrase, namely, *dim mäaih* (lit. “how sold?”) and *géidô chín* (lit. “how much money?”), and end with the interrogative, or question, particle **a**.

**Personal pronouns** (CD1; 30) (7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ngóh</td>
<td>I, me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>néih</td>
<td>you (singular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kéuih</td>
<td>he, him, she, her, it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngóhdeih</td>
<td>we, us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>néihdeih</td>
<td>you (plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kéuihdeih</td>
<td>they, them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic-comment constructions** (8)

In Cantonese, a sentence is often made up of a *topic* followed by a *comment*, the two of which are not joined by any grammatical parts, such as a verb. This type of construction can serve to highlight and make definite the topic. This sentence from Dialogue 1 is typical:

**Sei go mònggwó, yih-sahp mân là.**

(lit.) Four mangoes, twenty dollars.

In this case **sei go mònggwó** is the topic, and **yih-sahp mân là** is the comment about it. This construction is common among questions, too. The questions used when asking for prices are good examples:
Expressing thanks (10, 11)

Cantonese distinguishes between two kinds of thanks. We say dōjeh to someone for a gift or a treat, but mhgōi to someone for a favor or a service rendered. Thus, at the fruit-stall, the hawker will say dōjeh to thank the customer for the money paid for the fruit, while the customer will say mhgōi to the hawker for his service. In practice, it is not always necessary for the customer to say thank you. Another more colloquial way to say thanks for a favor to a friend (not in a service situation) is to feign how much trouble you have been to the person. For example, if a friend picks you up at the airport, you might say: Màhfāhn néih! “(I) troubled you!” To which the friend responds politely móuh màhfāhn “no trouble.”

Polite requests (14, 15)

The mhgōi and dōjeh in these two cases are interjections used as a polite way of making a request. The mhgōi in Mhgōi béi luhk go ā is a request made by the customer for a service by the hawker, while the dōjeh in dōjeh sahp-ngh mān is a request from the hawker for payment by the customer. (In a similar vein, in English a salesperson might say “Five dollars, thank you” in order to solicit payment, that is, in anticipation of receipt, rather than in acknowledgment of it.) The ā in Mhgōi béi luhk go ā is a particle, conveying here the mood of a polite request.

Exercise 1 Comprehension

Practice the dialogues, using the audio recordings if available. Then find the answers to the following questions.

(a) How much does the hawker say the fruit is in Dialogue 1?

(i) $5 each
(ii) $5 a pound
(iii) $10 for two
(b) How much does the hawker say the fruit is in Dialogue 2?

(i) $10 each
(ii) $10 a pound
(iii) $10 for four

(c) In Dialogue 2, how much change did the hawker give back to John?

(i) $5
(ii) $10
(iii) $15

(d) How much does the hawker say the fruit is in Dialogue 3?

(i) $20 each
(ii) $20 a pound
(iii) $20 for four

Exercise 2 Asking about prices

Imagine you are at a fruit-stall. Ask about the price of each kind of fruit with a dím maaih a question. Then guess whether the hawker will give the price for yāt go or yāt bohng.

(a) léi
YOU: __________ dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Sei mān __________

(b) sāigwā
YOU: __________ dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Sāam mān __________

(c) muhkgwā
YOU: __________ dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Sei mān __________

(d) bōlòh
YOU: __________ dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Sahp mān __________

(e) laihjī
YOU: __________ dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Sahp-yih mān __________
Exercise 3 Giving prices

Imagine you are a hawker selling fruit in the market. The table shows your prices in Hong Kong dollars.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Apples</th>
<th>Lychees</th>
<th>Papayas</th>
<th>Oranges</th>
<th>Watermelons</th>
<th>Pineapples</th>
<th>Pears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$10 for 3</td>
<td>$12/lb for 3</td>
<td>$20 for 4</td>
<td>$10 for 4</td>
<td>$4/lb</td>
<td>$9 each</td>
<td>$5 each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you answer the following enquiries about prices?

(a) Dī sāigwā dím maaih a?
(b) Dī léi dím maaih a?
(c) Dī mухkwā dím maaih a?
(d) Dī cháang dím maaih a?
(e) Dī bóloh dím maaih a?

Exercise 4 Making a sale

Now complete the following conversations, using the prices from Exercise 3.

(a) CUSTOMER 1: Dī pihnggwó dím maaih a?
   YOU: Ngóh yiu yāt dā pihnggwó.
   CUSTOMER 1: Géidō chín a?
   CUSTOMER 1: Mhgōi.

(b) CUSTOMER 2: Dī laihjī dím maaih a?
   YOU: Ngóh yiu sāam bohng.
   CUSTOMER 2: Géidō chín a?
   YOU: Nī douh sei-sahp mān.
   CUSTOMER 2: Mhgōi.
Exercise 5 Comparing prices

Mrs. Wong is doing some shopping. She wants to buy two pounds of bananas, a dozen oranges and half a dozen apples, and she wants to buy all the fruit at one stall. She asks about the prices of bananas, oranges and apples at two different stalls. Practice modeling the two conversations she has at the two stalls and then decide at which one she gets the better deal.

At Stall A:

MRS. WONG: Dī cháang dím maaih a?
HAWKER A: Sāam mān yāt go.
MRS. WONG: Dī pihnggwó nē?
HAWKER A: Pihnggwó sei mān yāt go.
MRS. WONG: Hēungjiu yau dím maaih a?
HAWKER A: Hēungjiu sahp-sāam mān yāt bohng.

At Stall B:

MRS. WONG: Dī hēungjiu dím maaih a?
HAWKER B: Dī hēungjiu sahp-yāt mān yāt bohng.
MRS. WONG: Dī pihnggwó nē?
HAWKER B: Pihnggwó sāam mān yāt go.
MRS. WONG: Dī cháang nē?
HAWKER B: Dī cháang sei mān yāt go.

(a) Which hawker offers a better deal to Mrs. Wong?
(b) How much does she have to pay if she takes this deal?
Exercise 6 What are the prices?
Read the conversation and then fill in the prices in the picture of the fruit-stall.

CUSTOMER: Dī tàihjí dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Dī tàihjí sahp-ngh män yät bohng.
CUSTOMER: Gám, dī kēihyihgwó nē?
HAWKER: Dī kēihyihgwó sāam män yät go.
CUSTOMER: Dī pihnggwó nē?
HAWKER: Pihnggwó dōou haih sāam mān yät go.
CUSTOMER: Dī muhkgwā dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Muhkgwā baat mān yät bohng.
CUSTOMER: Gám, sāigwā nē?
HAWKER: Sāigwā léuhng mān yät bohng.
CUSTOMER: Dī cháang yauh dím maaih a?
HAWKER: Dī cháang sahp mān sei go.
CUSTOMER: Gám, dī léi nē?
HAWKER: Dī léi dōou haih sahp mān sei go.
Exercise 7 Ordering fruit

Imagine you are on the telephone ordering some fruit from a grocery store. Give your order in Cantonese, according to the information shown in the table. The first item has been done for you as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Place of origin</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) apples</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) oranges</td>
<td>the U.S.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) grapes</td>
<td>the U.S.</td>
<td>2 lb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) pineapples</td>
<td>the Philippines</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) mangoes</td>
<td>the Philippines</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) pears</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Ngóh yiu sahp go Oujāu pihnggwó.

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

Recognizing Chinese characters

In the local market sometimes the prices are written in a mix of Arabic numerals and Chinese characters (see photo at the beginning of this unit), but sometimes they are in Chinese characters only. The Chinese characters for the numbers one to ten are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>一</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>六</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>二</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>七</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>三</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>八</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>四</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>九</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>五</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>十</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chinese character for “dollar” is 元.
Thus, one dollar is written as 一元.

This is pronounced as yāt mān in colloquial Cantonese. The classifier for “roundish” fruits is go, and is written as 個 or 个 in Chinese characters. Thus, “three dollars each” is written as 三元一个 and “five dollars each” is written as 五元一个.

The Chinese character for the measure “pound” is 磅.

“Eight dollars a pound” is thus 八元一磅 and “ten dollars per pound” is 十元一磅.

Communicative activities

If you have a Cantonese speaking friend or tutor, see if you can use what you have learned in this unit to do the following activities.

1. With a partner, take turns playing the roles of vendor and customer. Try to haggle down the price a bit (pèhng sīuu “a little cheaper”) by first arguing that the quality is not too good (mleng). Use whatever props you have handy.

2. Follow the patterns above to describe to your partner what you bought on a market trip. Tell them what it cost for each item.
Open markets in Hong Kong and China

Despite modernization and the increasing popularity of Western-style supermarkets in Hong Kong and elsewhere in China, open vegetable markets are still a popular place to buy fresh produce and meats. In these kinds of markets, the prices can fluctuate daily and one can often bargain according to quality and amount. Indoor supermarkets on the other hand typically have fixed priced labels.

In addition to the food markets, there are numerous other open street markets in the Cantonese-speaking world. Hong Kong’s Tung Choi Street and Temple Street night markets are widely popular with tourists seeking bargains on clothes, watches, toys, etc. Haggling for the best price is expected for most items here.
Unit Three

Sihou

Interests and leisure activities

In Unit 3 you will learn about:

- discussing interests and leisure activities
- more question-words
- discussing how often you do things
- expressing likes and dislikes
- verb-object constructions
- the uses of yáuh “to have” and “to exist”
- the uses of hái “(to be) in/at”
Dialogue 1

(CD1; 31)

John and Carmen are having tea with their two new friends at the Cantonese Students’ Club.

Carmen is talking to Richard about her own interests and Richard’s.

(a) What does Richard like to do in his spare time?
(b) What about Carmen?

CARMEN: Richard, néih yáuh dī mātyéh sihou a?

CARMEN: Richard, what kind of hobbies do you have?
RICHARD: I have many hobbies. I like to swim and play tennis. At home I like to listen to music. And how about you, Carmen?
CARMEN: I like to listen to music too. I also like reading and watching television.

Dialogue 2

(CD1; 33)

WONG Git is talking to Emily.

(a) What does Emily like to do in her spare time?
(b) What about WONG Git? What does he say his likes and dislikes are?

WONG GIT: Emily, néih dākhāahn yáuh dī mātyéh jouh a?
EMILY: Ngóh jüngyi hāahng-gāai tūhng tái-hei.
WONG GIT: Emily, what do you like to do in your free time?
EMILY: I like window-shopping and watching movies.
WONG GIT: I like watching movies too, but I don’t like window-shopping. In fact, I most like traveling, because I like taking photos.

Vocabulary

Interests and leisure activities (CD1; 34)

Below is a list of some common interests. Try reading each item aloud. If you have the accompanying audio for this book, model your pronunciation on the recording.

tái-dihnyíng/tái-hei to watch a movie
tái-dihnsih to watch television
heui-léuihhàhng to go traveling
yíng-séung to take pictures
těng-yämngohk to listen to music
těng-sàuyámgei to listen to the radio
dá-móngkàuh to play tennis
dá-làahmkàuh to play basketball
tek-jükkàuh to play soccer
cháai-dáanché to ride a bicycle
yàuh-séui to swim
páau-bouh to run
cheung-gō to sing
tái-syū to read
tái-boujì to read the newspaper
hàahng-gäa to go window-shopping
wáan-yàuhheigēi to play electronic games

Verb-object constructions

The leisure activities given above are all expressed in verb-object constructions, and are thus hyphenated. The first six largely parallel their English counterparts in structure and meaning. The next two (dá-móngkàuh, dá-làahmkàuh) use the Cantonese verb dá.
(lit. “to hit”), which is common for games where there is contact with an object using the hands. By contrast tek-jükkàuh is literally “kick-(a)-football.” And then chái-dânchê is “pedal-(a)-bicycle,” yàuh-séui is “swim-(in)-water,” and páau-bouh is “run-paces”; cheung-gō is “sing-(a)-song”; tài-syû is “read-(a)-book,” while tài-bouji is “read-(the)-newspaper”; hàahng-gāai is “walk-(along-the)-street”; vàan-yàuhheigēi is “play-game-machine.”

Expressing likes

júngyi to like
héifūn to like

Thus, “I like playing tennis” can be expressed as:

Ngóh júngyi dá-móhngkàuh.

or Ngóh héifūn dá-móhngkàuh.

Júngyi and héifūn

The modal verbs júngyi and héifūn are identical in meaning, but héifūn ranks higher on the level of formality and it is also used in Mandarin as well as in written Chinese, while júngyi is only used in colloquial Cantonese. Of the two words júngyi is more commonly used in daily conversations.

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. sihou hobbies/interests
2. Néih yáuh dí mātyéh What hobbies do you have?
sihou a?
3 Ngóh yáuh hóu dō sihou. I have many hobbies.
4 hái ngükkéi at home
5 Ngóh hái ngükkéi jauh (When I’m) at home then I like … jüngyi …
6 Ngóh dōu jüngyi I like listening to music too.
tēng-yämnghohk.
7 Ngóh yauh jüngyi tái-syū I also like reading
8 dākhàahn free, not busy
9 néih dākhàahn yáuh dī What do you do in your mätyéh jouh a? leisure time?
10 bātgwo ngóh mjüngyi but I don’t like window-shopping hāahng-gāāi
11 Kèihsaht In fact
12 ngóh jeui jüngyi I like traveling most heui-léuihháhng
13 yānwaih because

Verbal yáuh (2, 3)

Yáuh is a verbal form, which denotes both possession and existence. In Dialogue 1, Ngóh yáuh hóu dō sihou (“I have many hobbies”) denotes possession; whereas a sentence like Yáuh pìhnggwó (“There are apples”) denotes existence. Note that the negative of yáuh is móuh, not *myáuh. For example, Ngóh móuh sihou is “I don’t have any hobbies,” while Móuh pìhnggwó means “There are no apples.”

Indefinite pronoun (2, 9)

Dī here is used as an indefinite pronoun referring to an unspecified number of things. Used in this context it is usually translated as “some” in English. (See Unit 2, p. 35.) Thus, Néih yáuh dī mätyéh sihou a? more directly translates into “What are some of the hobbies that you have?” while Néih dākhàahn yáuh dī mätyéh jouh a? can be translated as “What are some of the things you do in your leisure time?”
Locative marker (4)

Hái is a marker of location: it is used in statements about where things are. It can be either verbal or prepositional. When it is verbal, it means “to be at/in.” For example, Kéuih hái säänggwódong means “He is at the fruit-stall.” But in another sentence, Ngóh hái sääng-gwódong maaih säänggwó (“I sell fruit at a fruit-stall”), hái is used as a preposition, denoting where I sell fruit. In the longer sentence Ngóh hái ngükkei jauh jüngyi tēng-yāmngohk (“When I am at home I like listening to music”), hái is verbal. The condition ngóh hái ngükkei (“when I am at home”) specifies the location where the action denoted by the main verb tēng-yāmngohk takes place.

Conditional marker (5)

Jauh is a very common adverb used to state a condition. It is put before the main clause rather than the conditional clause, thus meaning “then” rather than “if.” For example, Ngóh hái ngükkei jauh jüngyi tēng-yāmngohk specifies that the preferred activity tēng-yāmngohk (“listening to music”) takes place under the condition ngóh hái ngükkei (“I’m at home”).

Dōu (6)

Dōu is an adverb used in a response to indicate a shared fact: in the context of this lesson, a common hobby. For example, to Ngóh jüngyi dá-móhngkàuh (“I like playing tennis”) one says Ngóh dōu jüngyi dá-móhngkàuh (“I like playing tennis, too”). Here the adverb dōu qualifies the subject of the sentence, ngóh, and the use is similar to saying “Me too” in response to “I like playing tennis” in English.

Yauh (7)

Yauh is an adverb used to introduce a further item on a list (not to be confused with dōu above, which is used to respond to what somebody else has said). For example, one can say Ngóh jüngyi dá-móhngkàuh. Ngóh yauh jüngyi tek-jükkàuh. (“I like playing tennis. I also like playing soccer.”) Here the adverb yauh qualifies the object of the sentence, tek-jükkàuh, and the use is similar to adding “And soccer too” to “I like playing tennis” in English.
Varying degrees of likes and dislikes  (10)

To express dislikes, the negative prefix m- is used before the modal verb. Thus, “I don’t like swimming” is Ngóh mjungyi yàuh-séui or Ngóh mhéifun yàuh-séui. To express varying degrees of likes and dislikes, the following adverbs can be used before the modal:

- hóu very much
- géi quite (a lot)
- màh-má-déi so-so
- mhái géi not that much

For example:

Kéuih hóu jüngyi tái-hei. He likes watching movies very much.
Kéuih géi jüngyi tái-hei. He quite likes watching movies.
Kéuih màh-má-déi jüngyi tái-hei. He doesn’t like watching movies that much.
Kéuih mhái géi jüngyi tái-hei. He doesn’t like watching movies very much.

Note that as both màh-má-déi and mhái géi are already inherently negative in meaning, the modal remains positive to express a negative sentence meaning.

Exercise 1 Likes and dislikes

Express the following English sentences in Cantonese. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) I like taking pictures very much.
   Ngóh hóu jüngyi yíng-séung.

(b) He doesn’t like swimming.
   Kéuih mjüngyi ...

(c) She quite likes reading.

(d) We don’t enjoy watching television that much.

(e) They don’t like singing.
In Cantonese, a “week” is known as either singkèih or láihbaai. Singkèih is more common in writing and láihbaai is more common in speech. Here are the seven days of the week in Cantonese:

- singkèih-yáat or láihbaai-yáat: Monday
- singkèih-yih or láihbaai-yih: Tuesday
- singkèih-sáam or láihbaai-sáam: Wednesday
- singkèih-sei or láihbaai-sei: Thursday
- singkèih-ngh or láihbaai-ngh: Friday
- singkèih-luhk or láihbaai-luhk: Saturday
- singkèih-yaht or láihbaai-yaht: Sunday

Note that the pronunciation of “Sunday” (singkèih-yaht/láihbaai-yaht) differs from that of “Monday” (singkèih-yáat/láihbaai-yáat) in tone only. Remember that the tone for yaht (as in “Sunday”) is low level, and is much lower than that for yáat (as in “Monday”), which is high level.

### Time expressions

- yáat yaht: a day
- yáat go láihbaai: a week
- yáat go yuht: a month
- yáat nihn: a year

Note that in Cantonese weeks and months take the classifier go (the same classifier as for apples, oranges, and people), but days and years do not need any classifiers.

- yáat chi: once
- léu hung chi: twice
- sáam chi: three times
- sei chi: four times

Note also that yáat can mean “a” or “one” in the expressions above.
Unit 3: *Interests and leisure activities*  

**Dialogue 3**

*(CD1; 36)*

Carmen is talking to Richard about his hobbies.

(a) How often does Richard play tennis?

(b) On what day(s) of the week does he play?

---

**CARMEN:** Richard, néih jüngyi dá-móhngkàuh. Gám, néih géinoih dá yāt chi móhngkàuh a?

**RICHARD:** Ngóh yāt go láihbaai dá yāt chi móhngkàuh. Ngóh fūhng sīngkèih-luhk dá.

---

**CARMEN:** Richard, you like playing tennis … so how often do you play?

**RICHARD:** I play tennis once a week. I play every Saturday.

**Dialogue 4**

*(CD1; 37)*

John is talking to Emily about hobbies.

(a) How often does Emily watch a movie?

(b) How often does John go traveling?

---

**JOHN:** Emily, néih dāaihyeuk géinoih tái yāt chi hei a?

**EMILY:** Ngóh hóu héifūn tái-hei. Ngóh dāaihyeuk yāt go láihbaai tái léuhng chi hei. Gám, John, néih géinoih heui yāt chi léuìhhàhng a?

**JOHN:** Ngóh yáuh chèuhng gakèih jauh heui-léuìhhàhng. Dāaiyeuk yāt nihn heui léuìhng chi léuìhhàhng.

---

**JOHN:** Emily, about how often do you watch a movie?

**EMILY:** I really like watching movies. I watch a movie about twice a week. So John, how often do you go traveling?

**JOHN:** Whenever I have a long holiday, I go on a trip. I go about twice a year.
Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1 Néih géinoih dá yāt chi móhngkàuh a?
   *How often do you play tennis?*

2 Ngóh yāt go láihbaai dá yāt chi móhngkàuh.
   *I play tennis once a week.*

3 Ngóh fùhng sīnkèih-luhk dá.
   *I play (tennis) every Saturday.*

4 daaihyeuk   roughly, approximately

5 chèuhng gakèih   long holiday

Asking about frequency (1)

In a question about frequencies of activities, the question phrase géinoih ... yāt chi is used. Géinoih is used to ask about the interval between occurrences, while yāt chi literally means “one time.” Thus géinoih ... yāt chi? is equivalent to asking “how often?” in English. However, as most activities are expressed in verb-object constructions, always remember the special word order involved in such expressions of frequency, namely, the verb must be put before yāt chi while the object is put after it. For example, “to watch a movie once” is expressed as tāi yāt chi hei, and “how often do you watch a movie?” is néih géinoih tāi yāt chi hei a? Similarly, “how often do you play tennis?” is néih géinoih dá yāt chi móhngkàuh a?

Expressing frequency (CD1; 39) (2)

To say how often an activity happens, an adverbial phrase of frequency is often used. This is typically formed by combining a phrase expressing a period of time and one expressing the number of occurrences in it.

- yāt yaht yāt chi   once every day
- yāt go láihbaai yāt chi   once a week
- yāt go yuht lèuhng chi   twice a month
- yāt nihn sāam chi   three times a year
Again, as leisure activities are often expressed in verb-object constructions (*tek-jükkàuh*), the verb and object in the construction are *separated* in a sentence expressing frequency, and the following word order is used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Period of time</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Number of times</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngóh</td>
<td>yàt go yuht</td>
<td>tek</td>
<td>léuhng chi</td>
<td>jükkàuh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngóh</td>
<td>yàt go láihbaai</td>
<td>dá</td>
<td>yàt chi</td>
<td>móhngkàuh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regular activities**

For regular activities that take place on the same day every week, the word *fühng* can be used. For example:

- *fühng sïngkèih-yaht* every Sunday
- *fühng sïngkèih-yih* every Tuesday and Thursday
- *tühng (sïngkèih-)sei*

Thus, *Ngóh fühng sïngkèih-yaht tek-jükkàuh* is “I play soccer every Sunday,” while *Ngóh fühng sïngkèih-luhk dá-móhngkàuh* is “I play tennis every Saturday.” Note that in Cantonese the time expression always *precedes* the verb.

**Exercise 2 “Jack of all sports”**

Your friend Jack is a great sportsman. He likes many sports. Look at the picture and write about his interests and his busy schedule.
Example:

Exercise 3 Comprehension
Read the following questions. Then go back to the dialogues and find the answers. If you have the audio recordings, listen to the dialogues first.

(a) According to Dialogue 1, what hobby do Richard and Carmen share?
   (i) swimming
   (ii) playing tennis
   (iii) listening to music
   (iv) reading
   (v) watching TV

(b) According to Dialogue 2, what is WONG Git’s favorite hobby?
   (i) shopping
   (ii) going to watch a movie
   (iii) traveling
   (iv) photography

(c) According to Dialogue 4, when does John go traveling?
   (i) whenever he has money
   (ii) whenever he has a long holiday

Exercise 4 How often?
Express the following English sentences in Cantonese. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) I play soccer once a week.
   Ngóh yāt go láihbaai tek yāt chi jūkkàuh.

(b) I take a walk twice a week.
   Ngóh yāt go láihbaai …

(c) I go to watch a movie twice a month.
(d) I go swimming three times a week.
(e) I go traveling four times a year.

Exercise 5 Your hobbies
At a social gathering with your Cantonese Club friends, someone asks you: Néih yáuh dì mātyéh sihou a? How would you answer?

Exercise 6 Common interests
The table summarizes the likes and dislikes of Richard, Carmen, Emily, John, and WONG Git. Write in your own likes and dislikes in the fifth column. Then write some sentences to describe the common likes and dislikes. Try reading the sentences aloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Richard</th>
<th>Carmen</th>
<th>Emily</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>WONG Git</th>
<th>You</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>listening to music</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching movies</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching TV</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traveling</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taking pictures</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playing tennis</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playing soccer</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swimming</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singing</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>window-shopping</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example:**
Richard tūhng Carmen dōu jüngyi tēng-yāmngohk.
Richard, Carmen, Emily tūhng John dōu mjüngyi tek-jükkàuh.

Recognizing Chinese characters

Of the two Cantonese words for “week,” singkèih is written as 星期
Thus, for Monday, which is the first day of the week, we write 星期一
and for Tuesday, the second day of the week, we write

星期二

and for Sunday, we write

星期日，

where

d日

is the character for “the sun.” Below is a full list of the seven days of the week written in Chinese characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>星期一</td>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>星期二</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>星期三</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>星期四</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>星期五</td>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>星期六</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>星期日</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communicative activities

1. Interview a Cantonese-speaking acquaintance about his or her recreational practices, asking about activities he or she does at various times (once a week, once a month, twice a year and such).
2. Ask a conversation partner or friend about likes and dislikes. What kind of hobbies does he or she have? Switch roles and repeat.

Cultural points

Calendars

In modern times China uses the same calendar as the West, though sometimes with Chinese numbers. However, for observance of traditional holidays (Chinese New Year, Moon Festival, etc.) the Chinese use the lunar calendar. The Chinese zodiac also follows the lunar calendar.
The large character on the top, pronounced *fuk* in Cantonese, means “blessing(s).” Above the large character is the expression 年年有運, meaning “may you be fortunate throughout the year.”
This calendar acts as both a lunar calendar and a kind of almanac in the Chinese culture. Although most of the calendar uses Chinese, notice some of the numbering is in Arabic numerals and there are a couple of English words as well. This kind of mixing is especially common in Hong Kong. Note that the word Ramadhan next to the Arabic appears in the middle of the calendar. Because China has a significant Muslim minority, references to Muslim holidays are often included along with the traditional Han Chinese holidays such as the one featured on the page above. To the left of the number 14 are the Chinese characters 中秋节, Chung Chau Jit, meaning Mid-Autumn Festival (or Moon Festival), one of the most important traditional Chinese holidays.
# Some traditional Chinese holidays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Calendar date</th>
<th>Chinese name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Festival (Chinese New Year)</td>
<td>Begins with the first day of the first moon of the lunar calendar.</td>
<td>春節 / 花開節</td>
<td>The most important of the traditional Chinese holidays, this festival lasts for two weeks, though the first few days are the most important. Celebrations involve fireworks, buying new clothes, eating special foods, and visiting family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ching Ming Festival (Tomb Sweeping Day)</td>
<td>April 5 (April 4 in leap years)</td>
<td>清明節 / 吐鴨節</td>
<td>A day for paying respects to one’s ancestors by sweeping the tombs and offering food sacrifices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon Boat Festival</td>
<td>Fifth day of the fifth moon (lunar calendar)</td>
<td>端午節 / 花開節</td>
<td>Usually occurs in June of the Western calendar. People may celebrate by eating Jung (rice cakes) and holding dragon boat races. The festival is said to have its origins in the death of the famous Chinese poet, Chu Yuan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Autumn Festival (Lantern Festival)</td>
<td>Fifteenth day of the eighth moon (lunar calendar)</td>
<td>中秋節 / 翌日</td>
<td>Usually occurring in September, this celebration is a harvest festival. Activities include lighting of lanterns and eating moon cakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chung Yeung Festival</td>
<td>Ninth day of the ninth moon (lunar calendar)</td>
<td>重陽節 / 翌日</td>
<td>Usually occurs in October of the Western Calendar and is a day for honoring the elderly and the deceased. Chinese often celebrate with mountain climbing and paying respects to ancestors by visiting gravesites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit Four

Sìhgaan

Telling the time

In Unit 4 you will learn about:

- asking and telling the time
- discussing daily routines
- discussing what time things happen
- yiu as a modal verb, “to have to”

Dialogue 1

(CD1; 40)

John is talking to Emily at a Cantonese Students’ Club gathering. Emily is about to leave.

(a) What time is it now?
(b) What time is Emily seeing a movie?
EMILY: Yìhgá géidímjüng a, John?
JOHN: Yìhgá sei dím bun.
JOHN: Néih géidímjüng tái-hei a?
EMILY: Ngóh ngh dím bun tái-hei.

EMILY: What time is it now, John?
JOHN: It is 4:30 (now).
EMILY: Well, I need to leave now. I am going to see a movie.
JOHN: What time is the movie?
EMILY: I will see the movie at 5:30.

Dialogue 2

(CD1; 42)

LÀUH Gwok Sìhng is talking to Jack, the all-round sportsman.

(a) What time does Jack play tennis on Monday?
(b) What time does he go biking on Saturday?
(c) What time does he play soccer on Sunday?

LÀUH GWOK SÌHNG: Jack, néih sìngkèih-yāt géidímjüng dá-móhngkàuh a?
JACK: Ngóh sìngkèih-yāt yehmáahn chāt démjüng dá-móhngkàuh.

LÀUH GWOK SÌHNG: Gám, néih sìngkèih-luhk géidímjüng cháai-dāanchē a?
JACK: Ngóh sìngkèih-luhk hahjau sei dém bun cháai-dāanchē.

LÀUH GWOK SÌHNG: Sìngkèih-yaht nē? Sìngkèih-yaht néih géidímjüng wūih tek-bōa?
JACK: Sìngkèih-yaht ngóh seuhngjau gāu dém bun wūih tek-bō.

LÀUH GWOK SÌHNG: Jack, what time will you be playing tennis on Monday?
JACK: I will be playing at 7 p.m. Monday evening.
LÀUH GWOK SÌHNG: So what time will you go biking on Saturday?
JACK: I will go biking at 4:30 on Saturday afternoon.
LAUH GWOK SIHING: And how about Sunday? What time will you be playing soccer?

JACK: I will be playing soccer at 9:30 in the morning on Sunday.

Vocabulary

Reading the clock (CD1; 43–45)

Below is a list of the hours of the day. Try reading out each item aloud. If you have the audio for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.

| yāt dimjung | 1 o’clock |
| léuhng dimjung | 2 o’clock |
| sāam dimjung | 3 o’clock |
| sei dimjung | 4 o’clock |
| ngā dimjung | 5 o’clock |
| luhk dimjung | 6 o’clock |
| chāt dimjung | 7 o’clock |
| baat dimjung | 8 o’clock |
| gāu dimjung | 9 o’clock |
| sahp dimjung | 10 o’clock |
| sahp-yāt dimjung | 11 o’clock |
| sahp-yīh dimjung | 12 o’clock |

Note that in speech the jūng “clock or hour” in dimjung is often omitted, hence yāt dim is 1 o’clock and léuhng dim is 2 o’clock, etc. Notice that léuhng is used for “two.”

To specify more precisely the time of day, one can add the following expressions:

| seuhngjau | in the morning |
| hahjau | in the afternoon |
| yehmáahn | in the evening/at night |
| bunyeh | after midnight |

Thus,

| seuhngjau chāt dimjung | 7 a.m. |
| hahjau léuhng dimjung | 2 p.m. |
| yehmáahn gāu dimjung | 9 p.m. |
| bunyeh sāam dimjung | 3 a.m. |

In Cantonese, the expression for the time of day always comes before the expression for the hour, e.g. seuhngjau chāt dimjung and not *chāt dimjung seuhngjau. To indicate the minutes, one uses fān, as below:
léuhng dím sahp fān  
Sāam dím yih-sahp fān  
Sei dím sei-sahp baat fān  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ten minutes past two</td>
<td>léuhng dím sahp fān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twenty minutes past three</td>
<td>Sāam dím yih-sahp fān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forty-eight minutes past four</td>
<td>Sei dím sei-sahp baat fān</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that when the minutes are indicated we only say dím, never dímjūng, thus léuhng dím sahp fān and never *léuhng dímjūng sahp fān.*

Like English, Cantonese has special expressions for the half-hour and the quarter-hour, as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>half past two</td>
<td>léuhng dím bun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>half past three</td>
<td>Sāam dím bun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a quarter past four</td>
<td>Sei dím yāt go gwāt/sei dím sāam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a quarter to six (lit. “three quarters past five”)</td>
<td>Nghīm sāam go gwāt/nghīm gāu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that gwāt “a quarter of an hour” must take the classifier go. Note too that the use of gwāt is becoming increasingly uncommon among younger speakers in Hong Kong.

In Cantonese, there is one particular way of counting the minutes, not used in Mandarin Chinese. We divide up an hour into twelve five-minute units and we call each such unit a jīh. Jīh, like gwāt, must take the classifier go. Thus, yāt go jīh, léuhng go jīh. Below are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>five past seven</td>
<td>Chāt dím yāt go jīh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ten past seven</td>
<td>Chāt dím léuhng go jīh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a quarter past seven</td>
<td>Chāt dím sāam go jīh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twenty past seven</td>
<td>Chāt dím sei go jīh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The jīh in Cantonese refers to the numbers on the clock face. Thus, if it is, say, twenty minutes past two o’clock, the minute-hand of the clock will be pointing at the fourth number on the clock, which is the number 4 on the clock face, and hence léuhng dím sei go jīh. Very often, in colloquial speech, go jīh is omitted, and so:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eight thirty-five</td>
<td>Baat dím chāt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eight forty</td>
<td>Baat dím baat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a quarter to nine</td>
<td>Baat dím gāu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that while go jīh can be omitted, fān (for “minutes”) cannot. Consequently, baat dím chāt can only mean thirty-five minutes past eight, not seven minutes past eight.
Quick practice 1

Match the times in the left-hand column below with the Cantonese phrases in the right-hand column.

(a) 9:50 a.m.  seuhngjau sahp dím sei
(b) 11:35 a.m.  hahjau ngh dím sahp-yāt
(c) 10:20 a.m.  hahjau sāam dím baat
(d) 5:55 p.m.  seuhngjau gáu dím sahp
(e) 6:25 p.m.  hahjau luhk dím ngh
(f) 3:40 p.m.  seuhngjau chāt dím bun
(g) 7:30 a.m.  seuhngjau sahp-yāt dím chāt

Quick practice 2

Look at the times on the digital clocks and then tell the time in go jih. First write out the answer and then read it aloud. The first one has been done for you.

(a) 6:35  luhk dím chāt go jih
(b) 4:05
(c) 10:10
(d) 9:50
Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. **yihgā** now
2. **géidímjung a?** what time?
3. **yiu** must/have to
4. **ngóh yiu jáu la** I have to leave
5. **heui** go

**Géi**

**Géi** is an interrogative form in Cantonese, which means “what” or “how.” In Unit 2 we learned that **géidō chín** is literally *and* functionally “how much money?” Here, **géidímjung** is literally “what point of the clock?” and functionally means “what time?”

**Obligation**

**Yiu** is used here as a modal to express obligation, as in **Ngóh yiu jáu la** “I have to leave.” This is to be distinguished from the use of **yiu** as a main verb, which means “want,” as in Unit 2: **Ngóh jauh yiu yāt bohng lä** lit. “Then I want one pound.”

**La**

**La** is a sentence-final particle in Cantonese to indicate changed status. In Dialogue 1 above, Emily uses **la** with **Ngóh yiu jáu** to indicate she is leaving instead of staying.
Daily routine

Below are some vocabulary items referring to daily routine. Try reading each item aloud. If you have the audio of this book, model your pronunciation on the recording.

| héi-sān   | to get up          | fong-gūng | to leave work |
| sihk-jóuchāan | to have breakfast | sihk-māahnfaahn | to have dinner |
| fāan-gūng | to go to work      | fan-gaau  | to sleep     |
| sihk-ngaan | to have lunch      |           |              |

Note that sihk-jóuchāan, sihk-ngaan, and sihk-máahnfaahn are verb-object constructions formed with the verb sihk “to eat” and an object denoting a meal, jóuchāan for “breakfast,” ngaan for “lunch” and máahnfaahn for “dinner.”

More time expressions

| gāmyaht   | today          |
| tīngyaht  | tomorrow       |
| chāhmyaht | yesterday      |
| gāmmáahn | this evening/tonight |
| tīngmáahn | tomorrow evening/tomorrow night |
| chāhmmáahn | yesterday evening/last night |

Note that many Cantonese speakers say kāhmmáahn instead of chāhmmáahn. This is a kind of free variation, where neither pronunciation is more correct than the other.

Exercise 1 Telling the time

You are in the street. Someone comes up to you and asks, “Yihgā géidmjung a?” Reply according to the times given below. Remember you have several options as to how to tell the time. Write your answers first and then try reading them aloud. (The first one has been done for you as an example.)

(a) 12:45 p.m.  Yihgā (haih) sahp-yih dím gáu.
                Yihgā (haih) sahp-yih dím sei-sahp ngh fán.
                Yihgā (haih) sahp-yih dím sāam go gwāt.
(b) 3:35 p.m.
(c) 9:18 a.m.
(d) 11:52 a.m.
(e) 5:15 p.m.

Types of television program

- sānmán: news
- ĭnhei bougou: weather report
- dihnsihkehk: TV drama
- dihnyíng: movie/film
- géiluhkpín: documentary
- táiyuhk: sports
- choimáh: horse-racing

Dialogue 3

(CD1; 46)
John is talking to Richard about their daily routine.

(a) What time does Richard get up in the morning?
(b) What time does Richard go to bed?
(c) What about John?

---

JOHN: Richard, néih tünsèuhng géidímjüng hée-sän a?
RICHARD: Ngóh tünsèuhng seuhngjau chát dím sääm hée-sän.
JOHN: Gám néih yehmáahn géidìmjüng fan-gaau a?
RICHARD: Ngóh yehmáahn tünsèuhng sahp-yät dím bun fan-gaau.
Néih nē, John?

---

JOHN: Richard, what time will you get up tomorrow morning?
RICHARD: I will get up at 7:15 (tomorrow morning).
JOHN: So what time will you go to sleep (tonight)?
RICHARD: I usually go to sleep at 11:30 in the evening. How about you, John?
JOHN: I get up at 8:30 in the morning and go to sleep around 12:00 in the evening.
Dialogue 4

(CD1; 48)
Carmen is talking to her friend Mary on the phone. Mary has a TV guide and Carmen is asking her about tonight’s programs.

(a) What time is the evening TV movie?
(b) At what times is the daily news on?
(c) What time is the weather report?

CARMEN: Mary, néih gämmáahn géidímjüng táí dihnsih a?
MARY: Gämmáahn gáu dím bun yáuh hei táí.
CARMEN: Gám, géidímjüng yáuh sänmán táí a?
MARY: Gämmáahn luhk dím bun tühng sahp-yāt dím jüng dōu yáuh sänmán táí.
CARMEN: Gám, tînhei bougou nê? Géidímjüng yáuh dák táí a?
MARY: Tînhei bougou hái chât dím bun jouh.

CARMEN: Mary, what time will you watch television tonight?
MARY: There is a movie on at 9:30 tonight.
CARMEN: Then what time is the news on?
MARY: The news is on at both 6:30 and 11:00 p.m.
CARMEN: And what about the weather report? What time is that on?
MARY: The weather report is on at 7:30.

Dialogue 5

(CD1; 49)
John is talking to Jack on the phone. Jack is telling him about the sports programs being shown on TV over the next two evenings.

(a) When is tennis shown on TV?
(b) When is soccer shown?
(c) What about horse-racing?

JOHN: Jack, gämmáahn tühng tîngmáahn dihnsih yáuh mätýeh hóutái a?
JACK: Gämmáahn luhk dím yáuh móhngkàuh táí. Yihnhaus baat dím bun yáuh jükkáuh táí.
JOHN: Ngóh mh jüngyi táí móhngkàuh tühng jükkàuh. Gämmáahn yáuh móuh choimáh táí a?
JOHN: Tīngmáahn géidímjung yáuh dāk tái a?
JACK: Tīngmáahn gáu dím chāt yáuh dāk tài.

JOHN: Jack, is there anything good on TV tonight and tomorrow night?
JACK: There is tennis on tonight at 6:00. Afterwards at 8:30 there is soccer.
JOHN: I don’t care for either tennis or soccer. Is there any horse-racing on tonight?
JACK: There is not horse-racing on tonight, but there is tomorrow night.
JOHN: When is the horse-racing on tomorrow night?
JACK: Horse-racing is on tomorrow night at 9:35.

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1  tūngsèuhng  usually
2  gāmmáahn géidímjung yáuh  hei tái a?  At what time is the movie on tonight?
3  Géidímjung yáuh dāk tái a?  At what time can it be seen?
4  hài chāt dím bun jouh  shows at half past seven
5  hóutái  interesting (lit. “good to watch”)
6  yihnhauh  then, later on, afterwards
7  Gāmmáahn yáuh móuh choimáh tái a?  Is there any horse-racing on tonight?

Existential yáuh  (2)

Yáuh is used existentially here, i.e., to indicate that something exists. (See Unit 3 for the uses of yáuh.) Yáuh hei tái means literally “There is a movie to see.”
Possibility

Dāk is a verbal particle, which is used to indicate possibility or permission. For example, in Dialogue 4, in Géidímjüng yáuh dāk tái a?, dāk follows the existential verb yáuh and precedes the main verb tái, and the consequent expression yáuh dāk tài means “can be seen.”

Point of time

Here hái is a time marker used as a preposition, meaning “at (a certain time).” Thus, Tinhéi bougou hái chāt dím bun jouh means “The weather report is shown at half past seven.”

Jouh

Jouh is a verb with a wide range of meanings. Here it is not used with its most common meaning, “to do.” Instead, it refers to a TV program or a movie being on. Thus, Tinhéi bougou hái chāt dím bun jouh means “The weather report is shown at half past seven,” while Nī chēut hei hái Palace Theater jouh means “This movie is on at the Palace Theater” (chēut being the classifier for hei). Note that the word order of such sentences differs in Cantonese and English. In Cantonese, the time expression comes before the verb, hence Tinhéi bougou hái chāt dímjüng jouh. In English, the time expression comes after the verb, as in “The weather report is (shown) at 7 o’clock.”

Yáuh móuh

A choice-type question with the existential verb yáuh is formed from the positive verb yáuh and its negative counterpart móuh. (Note that yáuh is an exception to regular verbs in that it never takes the negative marker m.-) This choice-interrogative, yáuh móuh, is complemented by the particle a, in the function of sentence-question. Hence the question Gāmmáahn yáuh móuh choimáh tài a? “Is there horse-racing on tonight?”

Exercise 2 Comprehension

Read the following questions. Then go back to Dialogues 3, 4, and 5 to find the answers.
(a) According to Dialogue 3, who sleeps longer every night?
   (i) John
   (ii) Richard

(b) According to Dialogue 4, how many times is the TV news shown in the evening?
   (i) once
   (ii) twice
   (iii) three times

(c) According to Dialogue 5, what kind of program does John like watching?
   (i) news
   (ii) soccer
   (iii) tennis
   (iv) horse-racing

(d) According to Dialogue 5, what kinds of program does Jack enjoy watching?
   (i) news and weather
   (ii) tennis and soccer
   (iii) horse-racing

### Exercise 3 Daily routine

The table shows the daily routines of John, Carmen, and Richard. Write your own routine in the fourth column. Then write sentences to describe each person’s routine, including your own. After that, read the sentences aloud. (A few sentences have been written for you as examples.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Carmen</th>
<th>Richard</th>
<th>You</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>héi-sān</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>7:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fāan-gūng</td>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sihk-ngaan</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fong-gūng</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>5:15</td>
<td>5:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sihk-máahnfaahn</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>7:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fan-gaau</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 4 What’s on TV tonight?

Referring to the TV guide here, answer all the questions by first writing out the answers and then reading them aloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:05 p.m.</td>
<td>News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:25 p.m.</td>
<td>Weather report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>TV drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>TV movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Late news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10 a.m.</td>
<td>Weather report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Gämmáahn géidímjüng yáuh sănmán tái a?
(b) Gämmáahn géidímjüng yáuh tinhéi bougou tái a?
(c) Ngóh júngyi tái géiluhkpín. Gämmáahn yáuh móuh géiluhkpín tái a? Géidímjüng yáuh dák tái a?
(d) Gämmáahn gáu dím bun yáuh mätyéh tái a?
(e) Gämmáahn géidímjüng yáuh móhngkàuh tái a?

Recognizing Chinese characters

When telling the time in colloquial Cantonese, the expression dímjüng is used to refer to “o’clock.” However, in written Chinese, a different expression

時
(pronounced as *sīh* in Cantonese) is used instead. Thus,

一時

is “one o’clock,”

二時

is “two o’clock,” and

三時

is “three o’clock.” The Chinese word for “minute,” namely

分

(*fān*), on the other hand, is shared by spoken Mandarin and colloquial Cantonese, as is the word for the “half-hour,”

半

(*bún*). The written Chinese word for the “quarter-hour,”

刻

(pronounced *hāak* in Cantonese), however, is also a completely different expression from *gwāt*, which is used exclusively in colloquial Cantonese.

一刻

is “a quarter of an hour” and

三刻

is “three-quarters of an hour.” Below are some examples of times written in Chinese characters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>四時</td>
<td>4 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>五時十分</td>
<td>5:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>六時半</td>
<td>6:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>七時一刻</td>
<td>7:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>八時三刻</td>
<td>8:45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chinese word for “morning” is written as

上午
(pronounced sehngngh in Cantonese), and is different from the most common colloquial Cantonese term of sehngjau, though both share sehng, which means “the upper part.” Similarly, the Chinese word for “afternoon” is written as

下午

(pronounced hahngh in Cantonese), as opposed to hahjau in colloquial Cantonese, hah meaning “the lower part.”

Communicative activities

1. Ask your partner about his or her daily routine. What time do you get up? What time do you have breakfast? What time do you go to work? Switch roles and repeat.
2. Look up a TV guide (電視表 dihnsih biu) on the Internet and see if you can find out what time the news and other programs are on in Hong Kong.

Cultural point

China has a long history of technology and one of the earliest known clocks in the world, the water clock, is attributed to China. The oldest reference dates the use of the water clock in China to the 6th century B.C.E. In the second century C.E. the eminent Chinese astronomer Zhang Heng (78–139) created a mobile water-driven globe, which revolved in correspondence with the movements of celestial bodies. (Reference: Needham, Joseph (2000). *Science & Civilisation in China. IV:2: Mechanical Engineering*. Cambridge University Press.)
In Unit 5 you will learn about:

- describing people’s age and physical appearance
- pointing out people and objects
- terms for family members
- possessive forms
Dialogue 1

(CD1; 52)
John is on the phone arranging to meet CHAN Syut Wai, whom he has never met before. They need to find out about each other’s appearance so that they can recognize each other when they meet.

(a) What does John look like?
(b) What does CHAN Syut Wai look like?

CHAN SYUT WAI: Chíng mahn néih haih dímyéung ga?
JOHN: Ngóh daai ngáahngéng, géi gõu.
CHAN SYUT WAI: Gám, néih fèih dihng sau a?
JOHN: Ngóh mhaih hóu fèih, mhaih hóu sau. Gám, néih nê? Néih haih dímyéung ga?
CHAN SYUT WAI: Ngóh haih yáuh go dyún tâuhafta ge néuihjái, sau-sáu-déi, mhaih géi gõu.
JOHN: Gám néih yáuh móuh daai ngáahngéng a?
CHAN SYUT WAI: Móuh, ngóh móuh daai ngáahngéng.

CHAN SYUT WAI: May I ask what you look like?
JOHN: I wear glasses and am fairly tall.
CHAN SYUT WAI: So are you fat or thin?
JOHN: I am not too fat or too thin. How about you, what do you look like?
CHAN SYUT WAI: I am a woman with short hair, fairly thin and not too tall.
JOHN: And do you wear glasses?
CHAN SYUT WAI: No, I don’t (wear glasses).

Dialogue 2

(CD1; 54)
John and Carmen are at a gathering of the Cantonese Students’ Club. Carmen is pointing out Mr. Tong, her Cantonese teacher, to John.

(a) What does Mr. Tong, Carmen’s Cantonese teacher, look like?
(b) What does Mrs. Lam, John’s Cantonese teacher, look like?
JOHN: Carmen, bǐngu haih Tōng lóuhșī a?
CARMEN: Nē! Gō bīn hóu gōu, sau-sáu-déi, daai ngáahngéng gō go jauh haih Tōng lóuhșī laak.
JOHN: Gō bīn gōu-gōu-sau-sau, daai ngáahngéng, dyún tâuhaft, gēi lengjái gō go jauh haih Tōng lóuhșī âh?
CARMEN: Haih laak. Gām, néih go Gwóngdūngwá lóuhșī Lāhm táai nē? Kéuih hái bǐndouh a?
JOHN: Nē! Gō bīn chēuhng tâuhaft, móuh daai ngáahngéng, gēi leng gō go jauh haih Lāhm táai laak.
CARMEN: Haih-mh-haih ngái-ngái-déi gō go a?
JOHN: Haih laak.
CARMEN: Kéuih hóu hauhsāang wo.

JOHN: Carmen, which is Teacher Tong?
CARMEN: Look over there! Teacher Tong is the tall, thin one wearing glasses.
JOHN: That good-looking tall and thin man with short hair wearing glasses is Teacher Tong?
CARMEN: Yes. So, where is your Cantonese teacher, Mrs. Lam?
JOHN: Over there! Mrs. Lam is the pretty woman with long hair and no glasses.
CARMEN: Is she the fairly short one?
JOHN: Right.
CARMEN: She looks quite young.
JOHN: Yes, she is only 27 years old.

Vocabulary

(CD1; 55)

Physical appearances

Below are some words and expressions for describing people’s physical appearances. Try reading each item aloud. If you have the audio recording for this book, model your pronunciation on the recordings.
This list gives the adjectives or adjective phrases in pairs of opposite meanings. However, words such as  
gôu “tall” and ngáí “short” represent two poles between which are intermediate points for various 
degrees of height. Below is a list of expressions for describing different perceptions of height:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gôu</th>
<th>tall</th>
<th>lóuh</th>
<th>old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ngáí</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>hauhsáang</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gôudaaih</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>daai ngáahngéng</td>
<td>wears glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngáisai</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>móuh daai</td>
<td>does not wear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fèih</td>
<td>fat</td>
<td>ngáahngéng</td>
<td>glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sau</td>
<td>thin</td>
<td>yáuh wûhsôu</td>
<td>has a moustache/beard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chèuhng tàuhfaat</td>
<td>long-haired</td>
<td>móuh wûhsôu</td>
<td>does not have a moustache/beard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dyún tàuhfaat</td>
<td>short-haired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leng</td>
<td>pretty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lengjái</td>
<td>handsome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjective phrases such as daai ngáahngéng vs. móuh daai ngáahngéng and yáuh wûhsôu vs. móuh wûhsôu belong to another category in that they represent “either-or” situations without any intermediate
possibilities. Thus someone can only be daai ngáahn-géng or móuh daai ngáahngéng but never *géi daai ngáahngéng.

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. néih haih dimyéung ga?  
What do you look like?

2. néih fèih dihng sau a?  
Are you fat or thin?

3. Ngóh haih yáit go dyún tàuhfaat ge néuihjái.  
I am a short-haired woman.

4. néih yáuh móuh daai ngáahngéng a?  
Do you wear glasses?

5. Nē!  
Look over there!

6. gó bīn  
over there

7. gó go  
that person

8. Tôhng lóuhsī  
my teacher Mr. Tong

9. gó go jauh haih Tôhng lóuhsī laak  
that is my teacher Mr. Tong

10. gó bīn ... gó go jauh haih Tôhng lóuhsī āh?  
so, the ... one over there is Mr. Tong (lit. “Teacher Tong”)?

11. Haih laak.  
That’s right./Right./Yes.

12. néih go Gwóngdüngwá lóuhsī  
your Cantonese teacher

13. Làhm táai  
Mrs. Lam

She looks very young.

She’s only 27 years old.

(CD1; 56)

Asking about physical appearance  (1, 2, 4)

There are several ways to ask about somebody’s appearance. The first way is to ask a general question:
Kéuih (haih) dímyéung ga?    What does he/she look like?

Note that to ask what somebody looks like, the particle ga, and not a, is used. The question Kéuih dímyéung a? has a different meaning, that of “How is he/she?,” asking about feelings rather than appearance.

Instead of asking a general question, you can ask about a particular physical feature. There are two ways of doing this. The first way is to use the unmarked form of a pair of opposite attributes (for instance, “tall” is used in the pair of “tall vs. short”) and form a choice-type question:

Kéuih gōu- mh- gōu a?    Is he/she tall?
Kéuih fèih- mh- fèih a?    Is he/she fat?

The second way is to form an “either/or” question with the two opposing attributes by using the word dihng “or” in between:

Kéuih gōu dihng ngái a?    Is he/she tall or short?
Kéuih fèih dihng sau a?    Is he/she fat or thin?

To ask about “glasses vs. no glasses” or “moustache/beard vs. no moustache/beard,” a choice-type question using the existential verbs yáuh and móuh is used:

Kéuih yáuh móuh daai ngáahngéng a?    Does he/she wear glasses?
Kéuih yáuh móuh wūhsōu a?    Does he have a beard/moustache?

Describing physical appearance    (3)

There are two ways to form sentences to describe somebody’s physical appearance. The first way is to use the adjectives predicatively, i.e. without a noun:

Kéuih hóu gōu.    He is very tall.
Kéuih gōu- gōu-sau- sau.    He is tall and thin.
Kéuih màh- má- déi gōu.    He’s not very tall.

The second way is to use the adjectives attributively, that is, before the nouns they modify:
Kéuih haih yāt go hóu
gōu ge nàahmjái.
Kéuih haih yāt go
gōu-gōu-sau-sau ge nàahmjái.
Kéuih haih yāt go
māh-má-déi gōu ge nàahmjái.

He is a very tall boy.
He is a tall, thin boy.
He is not a very tall boy.

There are several things to bear in mind when using the adjectives attributively. First of all, the verb haih is needed. Secondly, a noun phrase is formed with a numeral (in this case, yāt), a classifier (in this case, go), and a noun (in this case, nàahmjái). Lastly, there is a special particle ge which must be used after the adjective, hence hóu gōu ge, gōu-gōu-sau-sau ge and māh-má-déi gōu ge.

Nàahmjái can be translated into English as either “man” or “boy,” depending on the context. It is used to refer to boys in their teens or young men in their twenties or thirties. The female counterpart of this is néuihjái. To refer to a more mature-looking man, the word nàahmyán is used. The female counterpart for nàahmyán is néuihyán.

Exercise 1 Your family members

Now introduce your own family by first saying how many family members you have, and then describing what each of them looks like.

Ngóh yáuh ... go ngükkiyàhn. Kéuihdeih haih ...
Demonstrative pronoun

Gó go is a demonstrative pronoun used to refer to a person or object not near to the speaker, and can be translated into English as “that.” Gó go is made up of two parts, namely the determiner gó and the classifier go. Hence, it can only refer to nouns that can take the classifier go. For example, gó go yàhn “that person” and gó go cháang “that orange” are fine but *gó go hei is not. The corresponding demonstrative pronoun for referring to people or objects close to the speaker is ní go, which has the specifier ní and means “this.”

Addressing people by title

Lóuhsí is a respectful word meaning “teacher.” In Cantonese it can be used as a title after the surname of the teacher. Thus, a teacher whose surname is Tòhng would be addressed as Tòhng lóuhsí. The same applies to some professions that enjoy a high social status. For example, the word for “lawyer” is leuhtsí, and the word for “doctor” is yīsāng; thus a lawyer whose surname is Tòhng is addressed as Tòhng leuhtsí, and a doctor named Tòhng is addressed as Tòhng yīsāng.

Emphasis

In gó go jauh haih Tòhng lóuhsí laak, both the adverb jauh, which means “precisely,” and the final particle laak, which is often used to indicate changed status, are used to give emphasis to gó go haih Tòhng lóuhsí “That is Mr. Tong.”

Question with àh

Gó go jauh haih Tòhng lóuhsí àh? is a question which is not asking for new information, but simply acknowledges what has been said and asks for confirmation. Gó go jauh haih Tòhng lóuhsí is a repetition of the original statement and the final particle àh turns it into a question.
Genitive pronoun

Here néih go is used as a genitive (possessive) phrase to mean “your” and so néih go Gwóngdünögwa lóuhsi means “your Cantonese teacher.” Notice that the genitive phrase néih go is made up of the pronoun néih “you” and the classifier go. By the same token, “my mango” would be ngóh go mônggwo, and “his book” would be kêuih bún syū, bún being the classifier for books.

Addressing married women

In Cantonese, we address a married woman by using the word taai-táai after her husband’s surname. Thus, “Mrs. Lam” is Làhm taai-táai, which in colloquial speech is often shortened into Làhm táai. Note, though, that if one asked a married woman’s name in the formal way, gwai sing (see Unit 1), it would be common for her to give her maiden name as that remains her surname after marriage. In order to be addressed socially as Mrs. Lam, a woman with the name WONG Ming Fong (married to a man surnamed Lam), might say Ngóh sing Wòhng, Ngóh sīngsāang sing Làhm “My surname is Wong, but my husband’s surname is Lam.”

Final particle wo

Wo is a final particle to express emphatic recognition of a mildly surprising fact; in the case of the sentence Kêuih hóu hauhsāang wo the unexpected observation is how young Mrs. Lam looks.

Expressing age

Seui means “years of age,” and so yih-sahp chāt seui is “twenty-seven years old.” Below are some examples of different ages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yāt seui</td>
<td>one year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lêuhng seui</td>
<td>two years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sāam seui</td>
<td>three years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp seui</td>
<td>ten years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yih-sahp seui</td>
<td>twenty years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yih-sahp ngh seui</td>
<td>twenty-five years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sāam-sahp seui</td>
<td>thirty years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the numbers under a hundred are so commonly used in colloquial speech, the two-syllable words such as yih-sahp, sāam-sahp, sei-sahp are often contracted in natural speech to form new shorter sounds. For example, yih-sahp is contracted into the single syllable y’ah (the apostrophe denotes the elision); thus, y’ah seui is “20 years old” and y’ah yēt seui is “21 years old.” Sāam-sahp is contracted as sā’ah and so sā’ah seui is “30 years old” and sā’ah chāt seui is “37 years old.” Here is a list of such contracted forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>y’ah seui</th>
<th>yih-sahp seui</th>
<th>twenty years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sā’ah seui</td>
<td>sāam-sahp seui</td>
<td>thirty years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sei’ah seui</td>
<td>sei-sahp seui</td>
<td>forty years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nh’ah seui</td>
<td>ngh-sahp seui</td>
<td>fifty years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luhk’ah seui</td>
<td>luhk-sahp seui</td>
<td>sixty years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chāt’ah seui</td>
<td>chāt-sahp seui</td>
<td>seventy years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baat’ah seui</td>
<td>baat-sahp seui</td>
<td>eighty years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gáu’ah seui</td>
<td>gáu-sahp seui</td>
<td>ninety years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ask somebody’s age, you say: Néih géidō seui a? (lit. “You how many years old?”) or alternatively, Néih géidaih? (lit. “You how big?”) The former is typical when the expected response is smaller, say 1–18 years. The latter can be used with any expected age, but is especially appropriate for those past adolescence.

Exercise 2 Contracted forms of numbers

Read the following contracted forms of numbers and then write the numbers in English. The first one has been done for you as an example. (A more beneficial way of doing this exercise is to listen to the audio recording and write down the numbers.)

(a) y’ah sei seui 24 years old
(b) ngh’ah yih seui
(c) sā’ah baat seui
(d) chāt’ah yēt seui
(e) gáu’ah luhk seui
(f) sei’ah gáu seui
Unit 5: Physical appearances

Final particle ja

Jā is a final particle which adds the meaning of “only.” Jā itself is a contraction of the final particle jē “only” and ā “emphatic marker.” For example, Kéuih yih-sahp chāṭ seui ja means “She’s only 27,” while Ngóh yáuh sahp mān ja means “I have only ten dollars.”

Vocabulary

Kinship terms

Chinese kinship terms are much more specific and complex than English ones. Below is a list of the most common ones. Try reading each aloud, and listen to them if you have the audio recordings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bàh-bā</th>
<th>māh-mā</th>
<th>jèih-jē/gājē</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>mother</td>
<td>elder sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gòh-gō/daaihlóu</td>
<td>jong jē/mūi-mūi</td>
<td>younger sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dāih-dái/sailóu</td>
<td>jái</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger brother</td>
<td>néui</td>
<td>daughter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that the first six are all reduplicated words, but the same character is pronounced on two different tones, though all six terms begin with a low falling tone. The alternatives for “elder brother,” “younger brother,” and “elder sister” do not follow the same pattern. Daaihlóu literally means “big boy,” daaih meaning “big,” sailóu literally means “small boy,” sai meaning “small,” and gājē literally means “big sister at home,” as gā by itself means “home.”

Dialogue 3

(CD1; 58)

John is looking at Emily’s family photo. Emily is telling him about the members of her family.

(a) How old are Emily’s parents?
(b) How old is Emily’s brother?
(c) How old is Emily’s sister?

EMILY: Nī géi go jauh haih ngóh dī ngükkéiyàhn laak.
JOHN: Nī go haih-mh-haih néih bàh-bā a?

JOHN: Kéuihdeih sei-sahp gáu seui làh? Kéuihdeih go yéung hóu hauhsāang wo.


EMILY: These are my family members.

JOHN: Is this one your father?

EMILY: Yes, this is my father. Next (to him) is my mother. My father and mother are both 49 years old.

JOHN: So they are 49? They appear so young!

EMILY: Yes (they do). Look! Next to the two of them are my younger brother and my younger sister. My younger brother is 12 years old and my younger sister is 11 years old.

**Idioms and structures**

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogue above. The *italicized* items are *new* items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. **Nǐ géi go** these (several people)
2. **ngūkkéiyàhn** family members
3. **ngóh dī ngūkkéiyàhn** *my* family members
4. **ngóh bāh-bā** *my* father
5. **gaaklèih** by the side/next to
6. **Kéuihdeih sei-sahp gáu seui làh?** So they are 49? (showing surprise)
7. **Kéuihdeih go yéung** Their appearance/they appear
8. **gāmnín** this year
**Demonstrative pronoun with classifier (1)**

Nī géi go is the demonstrative pronoun nī go with the numeral géi (several) in between, meaning “these (several people).” Remember that go is a classifier for some nouns only, and other demonstrative pronouns with different classifiers are needed for certain nouns. In Nī géi go jauh haih ngóh dī ngūkkēiyāhn laak the noun that nī géi go refers to is yāhn (people), which takes the classifier go.

**Modification of plurals (3)**

Although Cantonese nouns themselves are not marked for number, there are other ways to express the plural. Note that the marker dī precedes the noun it affects. The dī in ngóh dī ngūkkēiyāhn is a marker of modification for plural nouns. It combines with ngóh to form the modifier ngóh dī to indicate possession. (Remember néih go Gwóngdūngwá lóuhsī, above.) Thus, ngóh dī ngūkkēiyāhn means “my family members.” Similarly, ngóh dī syū means “my books.”

**Possession with family members (4)**

Ngóh bàh-bā means “my father.” It is a shortened form of ngóh go bàh-bā, where the classifier go is used. This kind of deletion ordinarily only takes place with nouns pertaining to close family relationships, such as néih màh-mā, and not with other nouns, hence ngóh bún syū cannot be replaced by *ngóh syū.

**Final particle làh (6)**

Làh is a final particle used to form questions showing surprise. Here, the question Kéuihdeih sei-sahp gáu seui làh? is a response to Ngóh bàh-bā tūhng ngóh màh-mā dōu haih sei-sahp gáu seui. The proposition that both parents are forty-nine is repeated and the anticipated answer is a confirmatory Haih a.
Exercise 3 John’s college friends

The dialogue below is between John and Carmen. They are looking at a photograph of John’s college friends. John is telling Carmen his friends’ names. Read the dialogue or, preferably, listen to the audio recording, and then label the picture with the correct names. Also, write their nationalities in brackets under their names.

CARMEN: John, nǐ go yáuh wǔhsōu ge haih bīngō a?
JOHN: Nǐ go yáuh wǔhsōu, daai ngáahngéng ge haih Michael. Kéuìh haih Méihgwok yàhn.

CARMEN: Gám, nǐ go gōu-gōu-sau-sau, chèuhng tāuhfaat ge néuihjái nē? Kéuìh giu māyeh méng a?

CARMEN: Gaaklèih nǐ go daai ngáahngéng ge néuihjái yauh haih bīngō a? Kéuìh hóu lēng wo.

CARMEN: Nǐ go ngái-ngái-dēi, móuh daai ngáahngéng ge nàahmjái haih bīngō a? Kéuìh haih-mh-haih Jümnggwok yàhn a?

CARMEN: John, who is the one with the moustache?
JOHN: The one with the moustache and glasses is Michael. He is American.

CARMEN: And what about the tall, thin girl with long hair?
JOHN: The tall, thin girl is Christine. She is French.

CARMEN: And who is the girl next to her wearing glasses? She is really pretty!
JOHN: Yes, Judy is quite pretty! (She) is English.

CARMEN: Who is the shorter boy without glasses? Is he Chinese?
JOHN: Yes, he is Chinese. His name is Li Ming.
Exercise 4 Teddy’s family

Refer to the picture of Teddy’s family and answer the questions. The first answer has been given for you as an example.
Recognizing Chinese characters

Below are the kinship terms relating to members of the family, written in Chinese characters.

爸爸 father
妈妈 mother
哥哥 elder brother
弟弟 younger brother
姊姊 elder sister
妹妹 younger sister

Communicative activities

1. Interview a partner about his or her family. Find out how many members are in the immediate family. Do members of the extended family live with your friend?
2. Describe in detail the physical appearance of a friend or family member. If you have a study partner or a Cantonese friend, try describing someone to him or her while the partner tries to sketch the person.
Unit 5: Physical appearances

Cultural points

1. When describing one’s family it is usual to go from oldest to youngest and male to female, but listing yourself last: for instance, saying who is in one’s family as: bàh-bā, màhmā, jēhjē, tūhng ngóh. “Father, mother, (older) sister, and myself.”

2. Chinese people tend to refer to unrelated friends or even acquaintances by the family term that would fit that person’s age relationship. For example, if you are a female in your late teens or twenties, children of friends might well refer to you as 姊姊 jēhjē or “older sister.” Likewise, a male in his forties may be called 叔叔 sūksuk or “uncle” and a female of the same age may be called 阿姨 a-yī or “aunt.”

3. Westerners are often taken aback by how directly the Chinese refer to aspects of physical appearance. A Chinese friend or even casual acquaintance might mention that you are fat or that your nose is quite large. Such directness is not always intended as rude, but is often just a matter-of-fact comment on how you look. It is best not to make too much of it.
Unit Six

Gachìhn

Prices

In Unit 6 you will learn about:

- larger numbers
- comparing
- using -jó for completion of action
- how to indicate the superlative
Dialogue 1

(CD1; 60)
John and Carmen have been invited to dinner at Mrs. Lam’s home. They are admiring the furniture in Mrs. Lam’s flat.

(a) How much did Mrs. Lam’s sofa cost?
(b) How much did Mrs. Lam’s dining table and dining chairs cost?
(c) How much did Mrs. Lam’s coffee table cost?

CARMEN: Làhmtái, néih ngúkkéi dī gāsī hòú leng wo.
MRS. LAM: Dōjeh. Ngóh dòu hòú júngyi ngóh ngúkkéi dī gāsī ga.
CARMEN: Nī jēung sōfá yiu géidō chín a?
MRS. LAM: Nī jēung sōfá máaih-jó yāt-maahn yih-chīn ngh-baak mān.
CARMEN: Gām, nī jēung chāantói nē?
JOHN: Ngóh jeui júngyi nī jēung chāhghēi. Yiu géidō chín a?
MRS. LAM: Nī jēung chāhghēi yiu sei-chīn luhk-baak mān.

Dialogue 2

(CD1; 62)
John and Carmen are chatting to Jack, the sportsman.

(a) According to Jack, about how much does a decent tennis racket cost?
(b) About how much does a good pair of running shoes cost?
(c) About how much does a good bicycle cost?

JOHN: Jack, ngóh séung máaih yāt faai hòu ge móhngkàuh-páak. Daaihyeuk yiu géidō chín a?
JACK: Yāt faai gēi hòu ge móhngkàuhpáak daaihyeuk yiu yāt-chīn mān lā.
JOHN: Gām, yāt deui hòu ge páaubouhhàaih nē? Yiu géidō chín a?
JACK: Yāt deui páaubouhhàaih daaihyeuk yiu ngh-baak mān.
CARMEN: Ngóh séung máaih yāt ga dāanchē. Yiu géidō chín a?
JACK: Yāt ga hòu ge dāanchē daaihheuk yiu baat-chīn mān.
**Furniture**

Below is a list of some items of furniture. The Cantonese word for “furniture,” namely *gāsī*, is, like its English counterpart, a collective and “a piece of furniture” needs the classifier *gihn*, hence *yat gihn gāsī*. The classifier for specific furniture items such as tables and chairs is *jēung*, hence *yat jēung sōfá, yat jēung chāntóí*. The classifier for other furniture items is often *go*, as in *yat go syūgá*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cantonese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>yat jēung sōfá</em></td>
<td>a sofa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yat jēung chāntóí</em></td>
<td>a dining table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yat jēung chānanyí</em></td>
<td>a dining chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yat jēung chāhgei</em></td>
<td>a coffee table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yat jēung önhlohyí</em></td>
<td>an easy chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yat go syūgá</em></td>
<td>a bookcase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dining chair and coffee table**

*Chāandang* is sometimes used instead of *chānanyí* to refer to “dining chairs.” To refer to an ordinary chair, probably *dang* is more commonly used in colloquial speech than *yí*, which is used in spoken Mandarin and written Chinese.

A coffee table is referred to as *chāhgei* (lit. “tea table”) in Cantonese, as Chinese people drink *tea* at the same kind of short, four-legged table usually put in front of a sofa which Westerners drink *coffee* at and call a “coffee table.”

**Amounts of money**

In Unit 2 we introduced the numbers 1 to 100 and we noted that “dollar” is *mān* in Cantonese. In this unit we will talk about larger amounts of money, up to one million. Below is a list of expressions for different amounts of money. Try reading out each item aloud. If you have the audio material for this book, model your pronunciation on those recordings.
The table below shows the Cantonese terms and English terms assigned to the digits up to a million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>baakmaahn</th>
<th>sahpmaahn</th>
<th>maahn</th>
<th>chin</th>
<th>baak</th>
<th>sahp</th>
<th>go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>million</td>
<td>hundred</td>
<td>ten</td>
<td>thousand</td>
<td>hundred</td>
<td>ten</td>
<td>unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thousand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To state a particular number, one reads from the leftmost digit to the right, as in English. The figures in the second table are spelt out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>baakmaahn</th>
<th>sahpmaahn</th>
<th>maahn</th>
<th>chin</th>
<th>baak</th>
<th>sahp</th>
<th>go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**baat-sahp gáu**

yāt-baak yih-sahp sāam
luhk-chīn ngh-baak sei-sahp sāam
nḡh-maahn luhk-chīn chāt-baak baat-sahp gáu
sāam-sahp sāam maahn
yih-baak chāt-sahp maahn

**Quick practice 1**

Translate the sums of money into Cantonese. The first one has been done for you as an example.
Gachihn

(a) $147  yät-baak sei-sahp chät män
(b) $256
(c) $1,789
(d) $5,620
(e) $15,000
(f) $37,500
(g) $937,000
(h) $562,100
(i) $1,520,000
(j) $4,689,000

Note that when there are zeros in the middle of a figure, like $194,022, the word lihng is used to link up the two parts. Thus, $194,022 is read as sahp-gáu maahn sei chën lihng yih-sahp yih män.

Quick practice 2

Translate the following figures into Cantonese. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) $203  yih-baak lihng sääm män
(b) $1,030
(c) $27,005
(d) $500,400
(e) $1,900,800

Uncertain amounts of money (CD1; 65)

Sometimes when the speaker is not certain about the exact amount of money, then the Cantonese word géi is used as a “wild card” to refer to the uncertain part. For example, géi män is “several dollars,” and géi-baak män is “a few hundred dollars.” On the other hand, sahp-géi män means “ten dollars odd,” while baak-géi män means “a hundred odd dollars” or “around a hundred dollars.” Below is a list showing how the word géi functions in such uncertain contexts:
Several

While the Cantonese word géi can be translated into either “several,” as in géi chīn mān (“several thousand dollars”), or “odd,” as in baak géi mān (“a hundred dollars odd”), there is apparently no equivalent in English for géi-sahp mān, which literally means “several ten dollars.”

Quick practice 3

Translate each of the “uncertain” figures below into Cantonese, using the word géi. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) $32?
   saāam-baak yih-sahp géi mān

(b) $5??

(c) $4,2??

(d) $36,???

(e) $1??,???

(f) $92?,???

(g) $1,2??,???

(h) $4,???,???
Idioms and structures (CD1; 66)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. **Nǐ jēung sōfá yiu géidō chíń a?** How much did this sofa cost?
2. **máaih-jó** bought
3. **Nǐ jēung sōfá máaih-jó yăt-maahn yih-chīn ngh-baak mān** I bought this sofa for $12,500.
4. **baat-baak mān yăt jēung** $800 each
5. **yăt faai hōu ge móhngkàuh-pāak** a decent tennis racket
6. **yăt deui páaubouhhāaih** a pair of running shoes
7. **yăt ga dāanchē** a bicycle (ga is the classifier for vehicles)

**The verb yiu**

The verb *yiu* by itself means “need” or “require.” For example, **Dá móhngkàuh yiu géidō go yăhn a?** is “How many people does it take to play a game of tennis?” In the context of prices, *géidō chíń* is used. For example, **Dá yăt chi móhngkàuh yiu géidō chíń a?** is “How much does it cost to play a game of tennis?”

**The aspect marker -jó for completion of action**

Cantonese verbs do not change in the way English verbs do (“buys, bought, buying”) to show past, present, future, and so on. However, certain aspects of the verb—whether it is a completed action or an action in progress, for example—are shown by attaching a particle (an aspect marker) to the end of the verb.

**Máaih** is a verb that means “buy,” and **-jó** is an aspect marker that indicates completion of an action. Thus, **Nǐ jēung sōfá ngōh máaih-jó yăt-maahn yih-chīn ngh-baak mān** translates into “This sofa was bought for $12,500.” Similarly, **Ngōh máaih-jó yăt dā pihnggwó** translates into “I have bought a dozen apples.”
The aspect marker -jó is a bound form: it cannot exist by itself or be separated from the verb, hence the hyphen before jó. In the case of a verb-object construction, -jó will come between the verb and the object, as in Kéuih heui-jó léuihhàhng (he/she has gone traveling).

**Exercise 1 At the travel agent’s**

John and Carmen plan to go for a ten-day holiday, but have not decided where to go. They are now at the travel agent’s, asking the prices of holidays to different destinations. The travel agent is called Grace.

Read the dialogue, then complete the table that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Price of holiday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Philippines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dialogue 3

(BD1; 67)
BAAK Yu Ping is talking to his colleague Kathy, who has recently arrived in Hong Kong from the U.S. and wants to find out about the postal rates in Hong Kong.

(a) How much does it cost to post a local letter?
(b) How much does it cost to send a postcard or an air-mail letter to the U.S.?
(c) How much does it cost to send a letter to the U.S. by surface mail?

KATHY: BAAK Yu Ping, hái Hēunggóng gei-seun pèhng-mh-pèhng a?
BAAK YU PING: Hái Hēunggóng gei-seun hóu pèhng.
KATHY: Gám, gei yāt fūng seun yiu géiōd chín a?
BAAK YU PING: Gei yāt fūng bún góng seun yiu go sei jēk.
KATHY: Hóu pèhng wo. Gám, gei yāt jēung mhngseunpīn heui Méihgwok yiu géiōd chín a?
BAAK YU PING: Gei mhngseunpīn heui Méihgwok yiu léuhng go sei. Gei seun heui Méihgwok dōu haih sāam mān jēk.
KATHY: Gám, gei pīhngyāuh seun nē? Gei pīhngyāuh seun géiōd chín a?
BAAK YU PING: Gei pīhngyāuh seun pèhng-dī, léuhng mān jēk.

Idioms and structures (CD1; 66)
The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogue above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. gei-seun to send something by post
2. Gei yāt fūng bún góng seun yiu go sei jēk. Sending a local letter costs only $1.40.
3. gei ... heui Méihgwok to send ... to the U.S.
The verb-object construction **gei-seun**  

**Gei-seun** is a verb-object construction in which *gei* means “to send by post,” while *seun* refers to any postal item(s). Thus, **Ngóh yiu gei-seun** means “I have to get something posted” while **Ngóh yiu gei yāt fung seun** means “I have to post a letter,” with *seun* meaning literally “a letter.”

---

**Jēk**

**Jēk** is a sentence-final particle which indicates “no more than” or “only,” here emphasizing the cheapness of the rate.

---

**Adjectives for comparing prices**

The following three adjectives are probably the most commonly used in comparing prices:

- **pèhng** cheap
- **gwai** expensive
- **dái** good value

When we compare the prices of two items, we use one of the two bound particles of comparison, namely **-gwo** and **-dī**, depending on the structure.

- **-gwo** is used when both items for comparison are mentioned:
  
  **Nī faai móhngkàuhpáak gwai-gwo gó faai (móhngkàuhpáak).**
  This tennis racket is more expensive than that (tennis racket).

  **Nī ga dāanchē dái-gwo gó ga (dāanchē).**
  This bicycle is better value than that (bicycle).

However, when only one item is mentioned, **-dī** is used:

- **Nī faai móhngkàuhpáak gwai-dī.**
  This tennis racket is more expensive.

  **Nī ga dāanchē dái-dī.**
  This bicycle is better value.

When three or more items are compared, the superlative **jeui** is often used, as follows:
Ní deui pāaubouhhàaih jeui pèhng.
This pair of running shoes is the cheapest.

Ní jëung chāantói jeui gwai.
This dining table is the most expensive.

Often—when the context is clear—adjectives have an inherently comparative sense. For example, asking who is the tallest in a group, one can simply say bīngo gōu? Or for which is the better of two, one can simply say bīngo hōu?

### Vocabulary

**Small units of money**

In Cantonese, a smaller unit of money than the dollar (mān) is hòuhjī, which is a “ten-cent unit.” Thus, “ten cents” is yāt hòuhjī, “twenty cents” is léuhng hòuhjī, and “ninety cents” is gāu hòuhjī. When both dollars and cents are mentioned, we put the dollars before the cents. For example, “three dollars and forty cents” is sāam mān sei hòuhjī, and “five dollars and seventy cents” is ngh mān chāt hòuhjī. However, in colloquial speech, most people would use a shorter form by dropping the hòuhjī at the end and using go instead of mān in between the two numbers. In this way, “three dollars forty” becomes sāam go sei, and “five dollars seventy” becomes ngh go chāt. Below are a few more examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chāt go luhk</th>
<th>$7.60</th>
<th>sāam go yih</th>
<th>$3.20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>baat go yāt</td>
<td>$8.10</td>
<td>sei go yih</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gāu go sei</td>
<td>$9.40</td>
<td>go chāt</td>
<td>$1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-yih go sāam</td>
<td>$12.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that $3.20 can be read as sāam mān léuhng hòuhjī or sāam go yih, but not *sāam go léuhng. (This is because when we say léuhng hòuhjī we are counting the number of hòuhjī’s there are, hence we use léuhng; but when we say sāam go yih we are reading out the number 2 from the figure $3.20, and hence yih is used.) However, $4.50 is read as sei mān ngh hòuhjī or sei go bun, bun meaning “half (a dollar),” but not as *sei go ngh. $1.70 can be read as yāt mān chāt hòuhjī or go chāt, the yāt being dropped for the latter. Similarly, $1.80 is read as go baat.
Quick practice 4

Translate each of the following amounts into Cantonese, using the short colloquial form. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) $5.90   ngh go gáu
(b) $9.10
(c) $5.50
(d) $8.20
(e) $1.40
(f) $0.60

Postage

Below is a list of different mail items. Pay special attention to the classifiers used—fűng for letters, jěung for postcards.

yāt fűng seun       a letter
yāt fűng búngóng seun       a local letter
yāt fűng hūngyăuh seun       an air-mail letter
yāt fűng pihngyăuh seun       a surface mail letter
yāt jěung mihngseunpín       a postcard

Búngóng

The Cantonese word in Hong Kong for “local letter,” búngóng, is made up of two forms, bún, which means “local,” and góng, which is the second half of the name Heünggóng (Hong Kong).

Exercise 2 Buying fruit

Carmen is buying some fruit at Ah-WONG’s fruit-stall. Read the dialogue between Carmen and Ah-WONG then complete the table with the information about how much of each fruit Carmen has bought and how much she has paid.

CARMEN: Dī cháang dím maaih a?
AH-WONG: Dī cháang léuhng go bun yāt go.
CARMEN: Ngóh yiu ngh go cháang.
Exercise 3 At the furniture shop

You are a salesperson in a furniture shop. A customer comes in and asks for the prices of various pieces of furniture. Answer the questions by referring to the price-list. The first item has been done for you as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sofa</td>
<td>$7,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coffee table</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy chair</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining table</td>
<td>$8,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining chair</td>
<td>$910</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bookcase</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) **Nǐ go syūgá géidō chín a?**

*Nǐ go syūgá yih-chín yāt-baak mān.*

(b) Gám, nī jēung chāantói nē? Maaih géidō chín a?
(c) Dī chāanyí géidō chīn yāt jēung a?
(d) Gó jēung sōfá yauh géidō chīn a?
(e) Ni jēung onlohyī yauh géidō chīn a?

Exercise 4 Carmen’s classmates

Refer to the picture of Carmen’s classmates, and answer the questions about their physical appearance. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) Bīngo néuihjái jeui gōu a?
   *Diana jeui gōu.*

(b) Bīngo nàahmjái jeui ngái a?

(c) Bīngo néuihjái jeui sau a?

(d) Bīngo nàahmjái jeui fèih a?

(e) Sally dihng Elsie fèih-dī a?

(f) William dihng Raul sau-dī a?

(g) Bīngo néuihjái yáuh daai ngáahngéng a?

(h) Bīngo nàahmjái yáuh wūhsōu a?
Exercise 5 Which apples?

Four kinds of apples are sold in the supermarket. (See the picture.) They come from four different countries, namely Australia, the U.S., Japan, and China. Compare their prices and then answer the questions. The first has been done for you as an example.

(a) Oujāu pihnggwó dím maaih a?
   **Oujāu pihnggwó sahp mān sāam go.**

(b) Méihgwok pihnggwó géidō chīn yāt go a?

(c) Jūnggwok pihnggwó dím maaih a?

(d) Yahtbún pihnggwó nē? Géidō chīn yāt go a?

(e) Bīndī pihnggwó jeui pēhng a?

(f) Bīndī pihnggwó jeui gwai a?

(g) Oujāu pihnggwó tūhng Méihgwok pihnggwó bīndī pēhng-dī a?

(h) Bīndī pihnggwó jeui dāi a?

Exercise 6 Comparisons

Translate the following sentences into Cantonese, using the comparative particles -gwo and dī and the superlative jeui as appropriate. The first has been done for you as an example.
(a) John is taller than Carmen.
   John gōu-gwo Carmen.

(b) Carmen is thinner than Emily.

(c) This coffee table is better value than that one.

(d) That dining chair is prettier.

(e) My tennis racket is more expensive.

(f) This sofa is the cheapest.

(g) Carmen’s bicycle is the best value.

Recognizing Chinese characters

十 ten
百 hundred
千 thousand
萬 ten thousand
十萬 hundred thousand
百萬 million

Thus, “two hundred thousand” is

二十萬,

元 being the Chinese character for “dollars,” “three hundred dollars” is

三百元,

“four thousand dollars” is

四千元,

“fifty thousand dollars” is

五萬元,

and “sixty-seven thousand dollars” is

六萬七千元.
Communicative activities

1. Take turns discussing some of your recent purchases. What did you buy, how much did it cost?
2. Imagine you need to furnish a new apartment or flat. With a partner, role-play a trip to a furniture store. Tell the sales clerk what you are looking for and ask about prices. Assume a budget of HK$30,000.

Cultural point

Hong Kong currency

The basic unit of currency in Hong Kong is the Hong Kong dollar. The Hong Kong dollar has been historically pegged to the U.S. dollar at about HK$7.75 to U.S.$1. Some bank notes are shown below. Note that there are special numbers for currency and accounting in Chinese in place of the simpler Chinese numbers, which can be easily altered. For example, instead of 二十 yihsahp “twenty,” one sees instead 貳拾. Such numerals were formerly used in markets as well, but have largely given way to Arabic numerals.
Unit Seven

Fāan-gūng

Commuting

In Unit 7 you will learn about:

- describing means of transportation
- discussing how long journeys take
- expressing necessity
Dialogue 1

(CD1; 69)

John and Carmen are chatting to Emily.

(a) How does Carmen go to work? And how long does it take?
(b) How does John go to work? How long does it take?
(c) How about Emily? What means of transportation does she use to go to work? And how long does it take her?

---

EMILY: Carmen, néih jūjóu dímyéung fāan-gūng a?
CARMEN: Ngóh jūjóu dōsou daap-deihtit fāan-gūng.
EMILY: Gám, daap-deihtit yiu géinoih a?
CARMEN: Yiu daahyek gāu go jih.
EMILY: Yiu gāu go jih gam noih āh?
CARMEN: Haih a.
EMILY: Gám, néih nē, John? Néih daap mátyéh chē fāan-gūng a?
JOHN: Ngóh jā-chē fāan-gūng.
EMILY: Gám, yiu jā géinoih chē a?
JOHN: Yiu jā daahyek y’ah ngh fānjūng chē. Gám, néih nē, Emily? Néih yauh dímyéung fāan-gūng a?
CARMEN: Gám, dōu géi faai wo!

Dialogue 2

(CD1; 71)

HO Syut Hwa and Jack are talking about how each of them goes to work.

(a) How does Jack go to work? How long does it take?
(b) How does HO Syut Hwa go to work? How long does it take?

---

HO SYUT HWA: Jack, néih jyuh hǎi bīndouh a?
JACK: Ngóh jyuh hǎi léihdōu.
HO SYUT HWA: Gám, néih haih-mh-haih yiu daap-syūhn fāan-gūng a?
JACK: Haih a.
HO SYUT HWA: Gám, yiu daap géinoih syùhn a?
JACK: Yiu daap yāt go jūngtàuh léuhng go jih. Gám, nēih nē, HO Syut Hwa? Nēih dím fāan-gūng a?

**Vocabulary**

**Means of transportation**

Below is a list of expressions about taking different means of transportation. Note that each of them is a verb-object construction, composed of the verb daap, which means “to take a ride on,” and a particular means of transportation. Try reading out each item aloud. If you have the audio material for this book, model your pronunciation on the recording.

| daap-deihtit | to take the subway (in Hong Kong, MTR or Mass Transit Railway) |
| daap-fóchē | to take a train |
| daap-bāsī | to take a bus |
| daap-siubā | to take a minibus |
| daap-dīnhchē | to take a streetcar |
| daap-dīksī | to take a taxi |
| daap-syūhn | to take a ferry |
| daap-fēigēi | to take a plane |

“To drive,” on the other hand, is jā-chē, which literally means “drive-(a)-car.” “To walk” is hàahng-louh, which literally means “walk-(along the)-road.”

**Duration of time**

Below are ways in which duration of time is expressed in Cantonese. Some items require the classifier go while others do not. Try reading each item aloud, or model your pronunciation on the audio recording if you have it.
Unit 7: Commuting

Note that special attention needs to be paid to the pronunciation of yāt yaht “one day” as there is only tonal difference between yāt and yaht.

As discussed in Unit 4, jih is used to refer to five-minute spans, and it takes the classifier go. For example:

| yāt go jih   | 5 minutes |
| léuhng go jih| 10 minutes|
| sāam go jih  | 15 minutes|

**Idioms and structures**

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. *jīu jōu*  
in the early morning

2. néih jīu jōu dǐm yéu ng a?  
how do you get to work in the morning?

3. dōsou  
mostly/usually

4. daap-deihtit yiū ĝéinoih a?  
How long does it take to go by subway?

5. Yiū gāu go jih gam noih àh?  
Does it really take as long as 45 minutes?

6. gam noih  
so long (time)

7. Néih daap māt yēh chē fān-gūng a?  
What means of transportation do you take to go to work?

8. yiū jā ĝéinoih chē a?  
How long does it take by car?

9. Ngóh msái daap-chē  
I don’t need to take any means of transportation.
10 Daaihyeuk hàahng bun go jüngtàuh jauh dǎk laak. I walk for half an hour and that's all it takes.

11 Gám, dōu géi faai wo! That's pretty quick!

12 Néih jyu hái bīndouh a? Where do you live?

13 Ngóh jyu hái lèihdóu. I live here.

14 Yiu daap yāt go jüngtàuh léuhng go jih. It takes one hour ten minutes.

**Means of transportation**

There are two ways of asking somebody what means of transportation they use, say, to commute to work. The first way is to use the question word dímyéung, sometimes reduced to dim:

Néih dímyéung fāan-gúng a? How do you get to work?

Another way is to form a question with the question-word mātyéh:

Néih daap mātyéh chē fāan-gúng a? What means of transportation do you take to go to work?

Note that the word chē in the expression daap mātyéh chē does not mean “private car,” but refers to all kinds of vehicles, including buses, streetcars, etc.

To say what means of transportation you use to commute to work, you mention the means of transportation before the verb fāan-gúng:

Ngóh daap-dihnchē fāan-gúng. I go to work by streetcar.

Ngóh gòh-gō daap-syūhn fāan-gúng. My elder brother goes to work by ferry.

Ngóh mùih-múi hàahng-louh fāan-gúng. My younger sister walks to work.

**Asking and saying how long**

To ask about the time taken to do something, for example to go to work, the question word géinoih “how long?” is used. Two kinds of structure are possible. The first uses the verb yiu “require” immediately before géinoih:
Néih jā-chē fāan-gūng yiu géinoih a?
How long does it take you to drive to work?

Néih hàahng-louh fāan-gūng yiu géinoih a?
How long does it take you to walk to work?

In the second structure, yiu is used as a modal preceding the verb, while the question-word géinoih is inserted between the verb and the object in the verb-object construction:

Néih fāan-gūng yiu jā géinoih chē a?
How long do you have to drive to go to work?

Néih fāan-gūng yiu hàahng géinoih louh a?
How long do you have to walk to go to work?

Similarly, two kinds of structure are employed in saying how long it takes to commute to work. The first structure is to use yiu as the main verb as follows:

Ngóh jā-chē fāan-gūng yiu Ngh go jih.
It takes me 25 minutes to drive to work.

Ngóh hàahng-louh fāan-gūng yiu Bun go jūngtāuh.
It takes me half an hour to go to work on foot.

The second structure uses yiu as a modal, followed by a split verb-object construction:

Ngóh fāan-gūng yiu jā Ngh go jih chē.
I have to drive for 25 minutes to go to work.

Ngóh fāan-gūng yiu hàahng Bun go jūngtāuh louh.
I have to walk for half an hour to go to work.

Exercise 1 Durations of time

Translate the following times into Cantonese. Some can have more than one possible answer. The first one is done for you as an example.

(a) 20 minutes yih-sahp fānjūng or sei go jih
(b) 36 minutes
(c) 45 minutes
(d) 55 minutes
(e) 1 hour 50 minutes
(f) 2 hours 7 minutes

**Question with àh to express surprise**  
(5)

Here the question with àh expresses surprise, or in this case, Emily’s shock at hearing how long it takes Carmen to commute to work, hence the comment gǎm noih àh?

**Msái**  
(9)

Msái, which means “do(es) not need to,” is the opposite of yiu, which means “need(s) to.” It is important to remember that sái is always used with m- to mean the negative while yiu “need” is always used in the positive. Hence, “Ngóh sái daap-chē” is wrong and so, in this context, is Ngóh myiu daap-chē. To form a choice-type question to ask about necessity, sái, rather than yiu, is used, hence Néih sái-mh-sái daap-chē fāan-gūŋ a? but not *Néih yiu-mh-yiu daap-chē fāan-gūŋ a?

**Halves**  
(10)

Bun is used to refer to “halves” of time units, as follows:

- bun fān$jung$  
  half a minute
- bun go jün$tåuh$  
  half an hour
- bun yaht  
  half a day
- bun go láihbaai/sīŋkèih  
  half a week
- bun go yuht  
  half a month
- bun nihn  
  half a year

Special attention has to be paid to the position of bun in expressions involving a whole number plus a half. For time durations that do not take the classifier go, bun comes right after the time unit, for example, “five and a half days” is n̄gh yaht bun. For time durations that do require the classifier go, bun comes after go rather than the time unit. Thus, “three and a half hours” is sāam go bun jün$tåuh$, and not *sāam go jün$tåuh$ bun. Below is a list showing how the “halves” are expressed:
Table of Durations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yāt fān bun jūng</td>
<td>1½ minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt go bun jūngtàuh</td>
<td>1½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt yaht bun</td>
<td>1½ days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt go bun lāihbaai/sīngkèih</td>
<td>1½ weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt go bun yuht</td>
<td>1½ months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt nīhn bun</td>
<td>1½ years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that when the figure is 1½, the word yāt is often omitted. Thus 1½ minutes can become fān bun jūng, 1½ hours can become go bun jūngtàuh, and 1½ days can become yaht bun, and so on. Another possible omission is the tàuh in jūngtàuh, and so 1½ hours can simply be expressed as go bun jūng.

Dāk

Dāk is an adjective which means “OK” or “all right,” indicating successful achievement of a goal. When the expression jauh dāk laak is used as the comment of a topic-comment construction it emphasizes the relative ease with which something is done.

Faai

The adjective faai has two meanings. The first meaning is “at a fast speed,” and the opposite is maahn, which means “slow.” But in this context faai refers to the “short time it takes,” and is the opposite of noih, as in the expression géinoih, discussed above.

Lèihdóu

In Hong Kong, there are a number of outlying islands (Lèihdóu), which are linked to Hong Kong Island, the commercial center of the territory, by ferry, the most important being Lantau Island, Cheung Chau, Peng Chau, and Lamma Island.

Durations of time

When a duration consists of both hours and minutes, the hours (the larger unit) come before the minutes (the smaller unit), as in English:
léuhng go jüngtàuh sei go jih 2 hours 20 minutes
sei go jüngtàuh ngh-sahp fänjüng 4 hours 50 minutes

With units of time larger than the hour, the word lihng, which can be translated as “and,” is used to join the larger unit and the smaller one. For example:

sei go läihbaai lihng sāam yaht 4 weeks and 3 days
sāam nihn lihng baat go yuht 3 years and 8 months

Stations, terminals, and stops

Cantonese does not distinguish between stations, terminals, and stops, and all are called jaahm in Cantonese. However, sometimes jüngjaahm refers to bus terminals and tram terminals when precise specification is called for or when those places serve as main locations. Below is a list of places where one boards vehicles and ferries.

deihtitjaahm subway (MTR) station
fóchējaahm rail station
bāsí jüngjaahm bus terminal
bāsījaahm bus stop
dihnchē jüngjaahm streetcar terminal
dihnchējaahm streetcar stop
máhtauh ferry pier

Describing a sequence of actions

When a journey involves more than one means of transportation, a detailed step-by-step description of the itinerary might use the following expressions:

sáusín first of all
yihnhauh/gänjyuh and then, later on
joi and again
jeui hauh finally
Exercise 2 Traveling to work

Three people are describing their journeys to work. Read the texts and then use the information to draw a diagram. Jane’s part has been done for you as an example.

JANE: Ngóh jiújóu cháit dímjúng chëut-mùhhnáu, sáusín hàahng léuhng go jih louh heui fóchëjaahm, yìhnhauh daap sei-sahp fânjúng fóchë, gânjyuh hàahng yåt go jih louh jauh faan dou güngsi laak.
HOME → walk (10 minutes) → train (40 minutes) → walk (5 minutes) → OFFICE

HOME → … OFFICE

HOME → … OFFICE

Dialogue 3

(CD1; 73)
Richard is telling John how he travels to work.

(a) How many kinds of transportation does Richard have to take to commute to work?
(b) How long is his walk to the MTR station?
(c) How long is his MTR ride?
(d) How long is his bus ride?
(e) How long does it take Richard to go from home to work?

JOHN: Richard, néih fään-güng sáí-mh-sáí daap-chë a?
RICHARD: Yiu a. Ngóh fään-güng yiu daap deìhtit tühng bási.
JOHN: Gám, yiu géinoih a?
Richard: Ngóh jiújóu baat dímjung chéut-mühnháu, săusín háahng lêuhung go jih louh heui deihjitjaahm, yihnhauh daap bun go jüngtàuh deihjit, gánjyu duap sei go jih bāsí, daaihyeuk gáu dímjung jauh fāan dou günsí laak.

John: Gám, jünsghung yiu géinoih a?

Richard: Yàuh ngükkêí fāan dou günsí jünsghung yiu daaihyeuk yāt go jüngtàuh lä.

Dialogue 4

(CD1; 75)

Mrs. Wong teaches in the same school as Mrs. Lam. She is asking Mrs. Lam how she travels to work in the morning.

(a) Altogether how long does it take Mrs. Lam to go to her school?
(b) How long is her walk to the rail station?
(c) How long is her train ride?
(d) How long is her MTR ride?
(e) How long is her walk to the school?

Mrs. Wong: Làhm táai, néih jiújóu dímyéung fāan-hohk a?

Mrs. Lam: Ngóh jyuh dāk yūhn, yiu yāt go jüngtàuh sīnji fāan dou hohkhauh. Ngóh săusín háahng lêuhung go jih louh heui fóchējaahm, yihnhauh daap ngh go jih fóchē, yihnhauh jyun deihjit, daap sei go jih deihjit, joi háahng lêuhung go jih louh sīnji fāan dou hohkhauh.

Mrs. Wong: Gám, jān haih yiu sèhng go jüngtàuh wo!

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1 Yiu a. Yes, I do (need to).
2 chéut-mühnháu leave home (lit. “go out the door”)
3 háahng lêuhung go jih louh subway station
4 daaihyeuk gáu dímjung jauh fāan dou günsí laak I arrive at work about 9 a.m.
Unit 7: Commuting

5 jüngguhng altogether
6 yàuh ngükki fāan dou gūngsī from home to the office
7 fāan-hohk go to school
8 Ngóh jyu dāk yūhn. I live far away (from school).
9 yihnhaulh jyun deihtit and then I transfer to the subway
10 joi hàahng léuhng go jih louh sīnī fāan dou hohkhahauh and (I) walk for another ten minutes and only then do I arrive at the school
11 sèhng go jūngtàuh a whole hour
12 Gám, jānhaih yiu sèhng go jūngtàuh wo! So it really does take a whole hour!

Expressing necessity

Here Yiu a is a short response to the question néih fāan-gūng sái-mh-sái daap-chē a?, meaning “Yes, I need to (commute to work).” A long response would be Ngóh fāan-gūng yiu daap-chē a. Once again, note that a negative response would be Msái, which means “No, I don’t need to (commute to work),” and not Myiu, in which yiu is not used as a modal of necessity but as a verb meaning “want to.”

Destinations

In a sentence which describes action or motion, the destination always comes at the end, introduced by the word heui:

Ngóh hàahng yih-sahp fāanjūng louh heui deihtitjaahm. I walk for twenty minutes to the subway station.

Heui is the word used to introduce a destination: for example, Ngóh sēung gei-seun heui Méihgwok “I want to send some mail to the U.S.” However, for “going to the office” and “going to school” we use fāan, which literally means “return,” hence fāan gūngsī and fāan hohkhahauh. A more predictable use is, of course, fāan ngükki “to go home.”

Ngóh jā baat go jih chē fāan gūngsī. I drive for 40 minutes to go to my office.
Ngóh daap yāt go jüngtàuh syūhn fāan hohkhaauh.
I take a one-hour ferry ride to go to my school.

Dou

Dou is a particle used between a verb of motion and a noun denoting a destination. Fāan dou gūngsī indicates the “successful” arrival at the office. Similar expressions are fāan dou hohkhaauh “arrive at the school,” fāan dou ngūkkéi “arrive home,” heui dou deihtjaahm “arrive at the subway station,” and heui dou máhtauh “arrive at the pier.”

Fāan-hohk

Fāan-gūng is a verb-object construction which means “to go to work.” Fāan-hohk, on the other hand, means “to go to school,” but it applies to both students, who “go to school to learn,” and teachers, who “go to school to teach.”

Dāk

The particle dāk is used between a verb and an adjective to indicate the result of an action. Ngóh jyuh dāk yuhn is “I live far away,” while Ngóh jyuh dāk káhn means “I live near.” Similar expressions are Kéuıh páau dāk faai “He/She runs fast” and Néih jouh dāk hóu hóu “You’ve done a good job.”

Sīnji

Sīnji is an adverb often used with the modal yiu to emphasize the fact that a condition has to be satisfied to accomplish something. When used in a question, it stresses the “How long does it take you?” part of the question. When used in a statement, it stresses the effort made to accomplish something, and bears the opposite connotation to that of jauh dāk laak, discussed earlier in this unit. A comparison of the sentences below will illustrate the contrast.

Ngóh yiu jā yāt go jüngtàuh chĕ sīnji fāan dou gūngsī.
It takes me a whole hour to drive to work.

Ngóh jā-chĕ fāan-gūng ngh gŏ jih jauh dāk laak.
It takes me only 25 minutes to drive to work.
Sèhng

Sèhng go jūngtàuh is an emphatic way of saying “an hour,” and goes together well with the word sīnji, as the sentence yiu sèhng go jūngtàuh sīnji fāandou hohkhaauh “it takes a whole hour to get to my school” shows. Similar expressions are sèhng yaht “a whole day,” sèhng go láihbaai “a whole week,” sèhng go yuht “a whole month,” and sèhng nihn “a whole year.”

Exercise 3 Durations of time

Translate the following time durations into Cantonese, paying special attention to instances where the word lihng has to be used. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) 38 minutes sāam-sahp baat fānjūng
(b) 5 hours 55 minutes
(c) 6 days
(d) 1 week and 4 days
(e) 3 months
(f) 2 years and 11 months

Exercise 4 Durations of time

Translate the following time durations into Cantonese, using the word bun if applicable, and paying special attention to its position. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) 30 minutes bun go jūngtàuh
(b) 2 hours 30 minutes
(c) 4½ hours
(d) 5½ days
(e) 9½ weeks
(f) 7½ months
(g) 5 years and 6 months

Exercise 5 How you go to work

Now describe how you travel to work and then write out the description in Cantonese.
HOME → … WORK

Description:
Ngóh … chēut-mùnháu …

Exercise 6 The optimist and the moaner

Some people take a long time to commute to work, depending on where they live and where their office is, while others take much shorter times. At the same time, some people are born optimists and accept things cheerfully while others moan about everything. In this exercise, each item provides information about how two people commute to work in exactly the same way and take the same amount of time but describe their journeys in different styles.

Follow the example and write out what each person says.

(a) A ½-hour bus ride, the optimist:
Ngóh daap bun go jūngtàuh bāsí jauh fāan dou gūngsī laak.

(b) A ½-hour bus ride, the moaner:
Ngóh yiu daap bun go jūngtàuh bāsí sīnji fāan dou gūngsī a.

(c) A 20-minute walk, the optimist.

(d) A 20-minute walk, the moaner.

(e) A 50-minute train ride and a 15-minute walk, the optimist.

(f) A 50-minute train ride and a 15-minute walk, the moaner.

Exercise 7 Going to Guangzhou

Imagine you work for a travel agency, and specialize in organizing trips between Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Some potential customers are at your office asking for information. Answer their questions by referring to the price-list. The first one is done for you as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price-list of trips between Hong Kong and Guangzhou for the year 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by ferry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by bus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Prices and time durations are the same for both HK → GZ and GZ → HK.
Conversation 1:

CUSTOMER: Chíng mahn yàuh Hēunggóng heui Gwóngjāu dímyéung jeui faai a?
YOU: Yàuh Hēunggóng heui Gwóngjāu daap-fēigēi jeui faai.
CUSTOMER: Gám, daap-fēigēi yiu géidō chín a?
YOU: (i)
CUSTOMER: Gám, yiu daap géinoih a?
YOU: (ii)
CUSTOMER: Gám, daap-syùhn nē? Daap-syùhn yauh géidō chín a?
YOU: (iii)
CUSTOMER: Daap-syùhn yiu daap géinoih a?
YOU: (iv)
CUSTOMER: Hóu, mgōi saai.

Conversation 2:

CUSTOMER: Chíng mahn Hēunggóng heui Gwóngjāu daap-fóchē dihng daap-bāsí pèhng-dī a?
YOU: (i)
CUSTOMER: Gám, daap-fóchē yiu géinoih a? Daap-bāsí yauh yiu géinoih a?
YOU: (ii)
CUSTOMER: Gám, daap-syùhn nē? Daap-syùhn yauh dím a?
YOU: (iii)
CUSTOMER: Hóu, mgōi saai néih.

Conversation 3:

CUSTOMER: Chíng mahn heui Gwóngjāu dímyéung jeui dái a?
YOU:

Recognizing Chinese characters

地鐵站       subway station
火車站       rail station
巴士站       bus stop
的士站       taxi rank
飛機場       airport
This list of Chinese characters shows places where different means of public transport can be taken. The word 站 (jaahm) is used in all items except the airport (fēigē ichēuhng), with 場 (chēuhng) meaning literally “field,” though sometimes the word 飛 fēi is omitted and 飛機場 fēigēichēuhng becomes 機場 gēichēuhng.

Communicative activities

1. Ask a Cantonese-speaking acquaintance how he or she gets to work. Include the means of transportation and how long it takes to get there. How long does it take in all?
2. Imagine that you have invited your friend over to your new place for dinner. Describe in Cantonese how to get to your home. How long will each section of the trip take?

Cultural point

Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated cities in the world and has a world-class transportation system to serve it that includes a network of subway trains, surface trains, double-decker buses, taxis, minivans, and ferry boats. The subway system (MTR) is among the most efficient and extensive in the world. The light rail and the KCR (Kowloon Canton Railway) both tie in to the MTR system. Its first line was opened in 1979 and the system now has 10 lines and 150 stations, including 68 light rail stops. Below is a map of the system. See if you can recognize any characters on the map.
Unit Eight

Kéuihdeih jouh-gán mātyéh?
What are they doing?

In Unit 8 you will learn about:

- discussing what people are doing and where
- using -gán to show action in progress
- more uses of -jó for completed actions
Unit 8: What are they doing?

Dialogue 1

(CD2; 1)

John and Carmen have been invited to Mrs. Lam’s home for dinner. They are having a chat in her sitting room before dinner.

(a) How many rooms are there in Mrs. Lam’s flat? What are they?
(b) How many people live in the flat? Who are they?
(c) How old are Mrs. Lam’s two children?

JOHN: Làhm táai, néih gāan ngūk hóu daaih wo.
MRS. LAM: Haih a. Ni gāan ngūk syun gēi daaih ga la.
JOHN: Gám, jūngguhng yáuh géidō gāan fóng a?
CARMEN: Gám, néihdeih ngūkkéi jūngguhng yáuh géidō yāhn a?
MRS. LAM: Jūngguhng luhk go yāhn. Ngóh tūhng ngóh sīnsāang lā, ngóh bāh-bā tūhng ngóh màh-mā lā, juhng yáuh ngóh go jái Kenny tūhng ngóh go néui Angel.
CARMEN: Kenny tūhng Angel yáuh gēi daaih a?
MRS. LAM: Kenny gāmnín baat seui, Angel jauh chāt seui.

Vocabulary

In Hong Kong most people live in rather small flats in high-rise residential blocks. Only the wealthy can afford to live in detached houses or mansions. However, there is no distinction between flats, houses, and mansions in Cantonese. They are all referred to as ngūk, which takes the classifier gāan, hence “a flat” is yāt gāan ngūk, “my flat” is ngóh gāan ngūk, and “your flat” is néih gāan ngūk.

The typical Hong Kong flat consists of a sitting room, a dining room, two to three bedrooms, a kitchen, and toilet/bathroom. Gardens and garages are luxuries found only in the houses of the wealthy, though a servant’s room is not uncommon in some of the bigger flats. Below is a list of Cantonese words related to different parts of a flat. All of these take go as the classifier, though the items ending in fóng can
also take gāan as their classifier. Try reading out each item aloud. If you have the audio for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.

(CD2; 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yáat go haaktêng</td>
<td>a sitting room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go faahntêng</td>
<td>a dining room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go chisó</td>
<td>a toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go fāyūn</td>
<td>a garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go chèfhông</td>
<td>a garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go/gāan seuihfông</td>
<td>a bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go/gāan syûfông</td>
<td>a study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go/gāan haakfông</td>
<td>a guest room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go/gāan chyûhfông</td>
<td>a kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go/gāan yuhksât</td>
<td>a bathroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáat go/gāan gûngyåhnfông</td>
<td>a servant’s room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rooms**

Most of the words for rooms end in fóng, which translates satisfactorily into the English word “room.” But Cantonese distinguishes between têng and fóng, in that têng refers to bigger rooms often used for entertaining guests. This is a function of the sitting room and the dining room, hence the terms haaktêng (lit. “guest room”) and faahntêng (lit. “meal room”). Also, the word chyûhfông “kitchen” has the alternative pronunciation of chèuihfông. In fact, the two pronunciations are both common, and can be regarded as free variations. The fòhng in chèfhông “garage” refers to the same Chinese word as the fóng in seuihfông or syûfông, but it takes the low falling tone when combined with chê, hence chèfhông.

**Idioms and structures (CD2; 6)**

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogue above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.
1 Nǐ gāan ngūk syun géi daaih ga la. I suppose it’s quite a large flat.

2 Lihngngoih … In addition, …

3 néihdeih ngūkkéi your family

4 ngóh sīnsāang my husband

5 Ngóh túhng ngóh sīnsāang là … There’s me and my husband …

6 Kenny túhng Angel yáuh gée daaih a? How old are Kenny and Angel?

Syun

Syun is a word used before the comment in a topic-comment sentence to indicate concession, as if saying in English: “Well, I suppose you can say that.” A more literal translation is “… can be regarded as ….” The mood is often reinforced by the use of the double particle ga la at the end of the sentence, as in Kéuih syun géi gōu ga la, which translates into “He can be regarded as tall” or “You can say he’s rather tall.”

The possessive néihdeih

Here néihdeih is used as a possessive adjective, and so néihdeih ngūkkéi is “your family.” Again, the classifier go is omitted because close family relationships are being referred to. (See Unit 5, p. 84.)

Sīnsāang

The noun sīnsāang has several meanings. It is a polite way of addressing a man (see Unit 1). It also means “teacher” (both male and female) as well as “husband.” The distinction between sīnsāang meaning “teacher” and meaning “husband” lies in the presence of the classifier go. In the former use, this noun is most likely to be qualified by the subject taught and the classifier go is used, as in Kéuih haih ngóh go Yingmán sīnsāang “He is my English teacher.” In the latter, as with all intimate family relationships, go is omitted and so Kéuih haih ngóh sīnsāang has to be “He is my husband.” The Cantonese word for “wife” is taai-táai, and “my wife” is ngóh taai-táai.
The particle _packets

One function of the particle _lā_ is listing a number of items of the same nature. In Dialogue 1, Mrs. Lam is listing the people in her family. Another example would be: Ngóh yáuh hóu dō sihou: yàuh-séui _lā_, dá-móhngkàuh _lā_, tek-jükkàuh _lā_, tūng cháai-dāanchē “I have many hobbies: swimming, playing tennis, playing soccer, and cycling.”

Asking about age

In Unit 5 we introduced the question Néih géidō seuí a? to ask somebody’s age. Another way of asking someone’s age is Kéuih yáuh géi daaih a?, which literally means “How big is he/she?” The former is typical when the expected age is younger.

Vocabulary

Completed actions (CD2; 5)

In Unit 6, we learned that the bound particle _-jó_ is used with a verb to indicate the completion of an action. For example, Kéuih máaih-jó yāt ga chē is “He has bought a car.” Below are some more expressions, all beginning with heui-jó, some followed by a word denoting a place and some by a word denoting an action. The first expression heui-jó gāai, however, means simply “has gone out” but does not specify where or why.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>heui-jó gāai</th>
<th>has/have gone out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó tòuhsyūgūn</td>
<td>has/have gone to the library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó gāaisih</td>
<td>has/have gone to the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó hōitāan</td>
<td>has/have gone to the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó wihsngchih</td>
<td>has/have gone to the swimming pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó tái-hei</td>
<td>has/have gone to watch a movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó yām-bējāu</td>
<td>has/have gone for a beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó dā-móhngkàuh</td>
<td>has/have gone to play tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó yàuh-séui</td>
<td>has/have gone swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó tái-jükkàuh</td>
<td>has/have gone to watch football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heui-jó tēng-yāmngohkwū</td>
<td>has/have gone to a concert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Very often both the “where” and the “why” are mentioned in a statement. In such a case the “where” always comes before the “why”:

Ngóh taai-táai heui-jó gāaisih máaih sāanggwó.
My wife has gone to the market to buy fruit.

Kéuih gòh-gò heui-jó hóitāan yàuh-séui.
His brother has gone to the beach to swim.

In certain instances the word *fāan*, which literally means “return,” is used instead of *heui*. The best examples are *fāan ngūkkéi* “to go home,” *fāan hohkhaauh* “to go to school,” and *fāan gūngsì* “to go to the office.” (See Unit 7, pp. 123–4.) They are fixed expressions and it would be wrong to replace *fāan* by *heui*, regardless of where the speaker is. In other words, both “He has gone home” (said by, say, a colleague in the office on the phone) and “He has come home” (said by, say, one member of the family to another at home) would translate into *Kéuih fāan-jó ngūkkéi*. Below are two more examples:

Kéuih fāan-jó hohkhaauh dá-móhkangkàuh.
He/She has gone to his/her school to play tennis.

Kéuih fāan-jó gūngsì hōi-wūi.
He/She has gone to the office for a meeting.

To ask where somebody has gone, however, *heui-jó* is used (and never *fāan-jó*), together with the question-word *bīndouh*, as follows:

Kéuih heui-jó bīndouh a?
Where has he/she gone?

### Dialogue 2

(CD2; 3)

John and Carmen are still chatting with Mrs. Lam in the sitting room before dinner.

(a) Where is Mrs. Lam’s husband?
(b) Where is Mrs. Lam’s father?
(c) Where is Mrs. Lam’s mother?
(d) Where has Kenny gone?
(e) Where has Angel gone?

JOHN: Làhm táai, néih sīnsāang hái bīndouh a?
JOHN: Gám, néih bāh-bā tūhng màh-mā nē?
CARMEN: Gám, Kenny tūhng Angel nē?
CARMEN: Kenny heui-jó bīndouh yāuḥ-sēui a?
MRS. LAM: Kéuih heui-jó wihngchīh yāuḥ-sēui.
JOHN: Gám, Angel fāan hohkhaauh jouh mātyleh a?

Idioms and structures (CD2; 6)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogue above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1  nãoh sīnsāang hái bīndouh a?  Where is your husband?
2  Ngóh sīnsāang juhng hái gūngsī.  My husband is still at his office.
3  Kéuih yīhgā hōi-gān wūi.  He is having a meeting.
4  Keuih daaihyeuk chāt dīmjūng jauh fāan lēih ga laak.  I’m sure (he) will be back at seven.
5  Ngóh màh-mā hái chyūhfōng jyū-gān faahn.  My mother is in the kitchen cooking.

Asking and stating where somebody is  (1)

As discussed in Unit 3, hái is a locative marker, which can be either verbal or prepositional. In the question Néih sīnsāang hái bīndouh a? “Where is your husband?,” hái is used as a verb and the enquiry is about a state rather than an action.
Progressive action (CD2; 6)

In Cantonese, we use the aspect marker -gán with a verb to describe an action which is in the process of taking place. Thus, Kéuih dá-gán môhngkàuh is “He/She is playing tennis,” and Ngóh têng-gán yâmng-gohk is “I am listening to music.” Below are some more examples of “actions in progress.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action (Cantonese)</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tái-gán dihnsih</td>
<td>watching television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jyú-gán faahn</td>
<td>cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chüng-gán lèuhng</td>
<td>taking a bath/shower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dühk-gán syū</td>
<td>studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fan-gán gaau</td>
<td>sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>góng-gán dihnwá</td>
<td>talking on the phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ask what somebody is doing at a particular time, we use the verb jouh with the aspect marker -gán, as follows:

Kéuih (yihgā) jouh-gán mātyēh a?
What is he/she doing (now)?

Exercise 1 Action in progress

Answer the questions with the cue word provided, using -gán for action in progress. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) John jouh-gán mātyēh a? yàuh-séui
John yàuh-gán seuī.

(b) HO Syut Hwa jouh-gán mātyēh a? jyú-faahn

(c) CHAN Syut Wai jouh-gán mātyēh a? cheung-gō

(d) Jimmy jouh-gán mātyēh a? dá-làahmkàuh

(e) Wendy jouh-gán mātyēh a? tái-dihnsih

Ga laak

Ga laak is a combination of two sentence-final particles used to express reassurance.

Stating whereabouts and action

Very often, in a statement, information is given about both where somebody is and what he or she is doing there:
Exercise 2 Comprehension

Read Dialogue 2 again, or if you have the audio for this book, listen to the recording again, and then answer the following questions.

During Mrs. Lam’s conversation with John and Carmen,

(a) What is Mr. Lam doing?
(b) What is Mrs. Lam’s father doing?
(c) What is Mrs. Lam’s mother doing?
(d) What is Kenny doing?
(e) What is Angel doing?

Exercise 3 Actions in progress vs. habitual actions

Remember that -gán is used only when referring to actions currently taking place, not when referring to habitual actions or likes and dislikes. Translate the English sentences into Cantonese, focusing on the use of the verb. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) He is reading in his study.

Answer: Kéuih hái syūfong tái-gán syū.
(b) I go to work by MTR.
(c) She enjoys watching movies.
(d) I play tennis every Tuesday.
(e) My mother is sleeping.
(f) My father likes listening to music.
(g) My wife enjoys cooking.
(h) My older sister is playing games.

Exercise 4 My house

(a) The Chans live in a flat on the sixth floor of a residential block. Referring to the picture below, complete Mr. Chan's description of his flat.

MR. CHAN: Ngóhdeih gāan ngūk yáuh yāt go haaktēng, yāt go faahntēng, ...
(b) The Poons are one of the few rich families in Hong Kong who can afford to live in a garden house. Referring to the picture below, complete Mr. Poon’s description of his house.

MR. POON: Ngóhdeih gāan ngūk yáuh yát go haaktēng …

(c) Now describe your own house or flat.

YOU: Ngóh gāan ngūk yáuh …

Exercise 5 What are they doing?

The Wongs are a nosy couple. They like watching the activities of their neighbors across the street. This evening they are watching the Chans. Mr. Wong, who has poor eyesight, is asking what Mrs. Wong sees. Referring to the picture on p. 141, complete the conversation between Mr. Wong and Mrs. Wong.

MR. WONG: Chàhn táai jouh-gán mātyéh a?
MRS. WONG: Chàhn táai hái chyuḥfōng sái-gán wún.
MR. WONG: Gám, Chàhn sînsâang nê?
MRS. WONG: (a) Chàhn sînsâang hái faahntêng ...
MR. WONG: Gám, kéuïhdeih go jài jowh-gân mátyéh a?
MRS. WONG: (b) Kéuih hái haaktêng ...
MR. WONG: Kéuihdeih go néui nê?
MRS. WONG: (c) Kéuih ...

Exercise 6 Where have they gone?

It is Sunday. John rings Mrs. Lam, and her father answers the phone. He tells John that the whole family have gone out for different activities with various friends, and patiently tells John where each one has gone. Referring to the information below, complete the conversation between John and Mrs. Lam’s father.
Mr. Lam: to watch a football match
Mrs. Lam: shopping
Kenny: to play tennis
Angel: to a concert

JOHN: Làhm táai heui-jó bîndouh a?
MRS. LAM’S FATHER: (a) Kéuih heui-jó . . .
JOHN: Gám, Làhm sînsâang nê?
MRS. LAM’S FATHER: (b) Kéuih . . .
JOHN: Kenny yauh heui-jó bîndouh a?
MRS. LAM’S FATHER: (c) Kenny . . .
JOHN: Gám, Angel nê?
MRS. LAM’S FATHER: (d)

Recognizing Chinese characters

客廳 sitting room
飯廳 dining room
睡房 bedroom
書房 study
客房 guest room
廚房 kitchen
廁所 toilet
浴室 bathroom
工人房 servant’s room

Communicative activities

1. Ask your partner about things he or she has done recently. (For example, have you been swimming? If so, when and where?)
2. Ask your partner to describe the place where he or she lives. Is it large? How many rooms are there? What sorts of rooms are there?
Cultural point

Cantonese has many ways to greet people. We have learned the formal Néih hóu, but commonly people greet by stating the obvious, such as fāangong a? “So (you) are going to work (then)?” or even sihkfaahn a? “So (you) are eating (then)?” The appropriate response then is to affirm that you are doing what the person mentions or sometimes correct their perception. These kinds of exchanges are simply conventional ways to acknowledge someone, just as in English asking how someone is does not really constitute a question but a salutation.
In Unit 9 you will learn about:

- asking people to do things
- responding to requests
- using *meih* for actions still to be taken
- using *yǔhn* to discuss when actions are completed
Unit 9: Can you help me?

Dialogue 1

(CD2; 7)
Mrs. Lam is busy with housework, and wants her children to help.

(a) What does Mrs. Lam want help with?
(b) Which of her two children is able to help?

MRS. LAM: Angel, dī sāam meih sái. Néih hō-mh-hóyīh tūhung ngōh sāi-sāam a?
ANGEL: Mdāk a, māmīh. Ngōh yiu heui yàuh-séui a.
MRS. LAM: Gām, Kenny né? Néih tūhung ngōh sāi-sāam dāk-mh-dāk a?
KENNY: Dāk, móuh mahntāih.

Dialogue 2

(CD2; 9)
It is eight in the evening. The Lams have just finished dinner. Mrs. Lam is distributing the housework to the members of her family.

(a) Who is going to clear the table?
(b) Who is going to wash up?
(c) Who is going to empty the trash bin?

MRS. LAM: Kenny, néih bōngsāu jāp-tói dāk-mh-dāk?
KENNY: Hāu ak.
MRS. LAM: Gām, Angel, mgōi néih sāi-wūn ā.
ANGEL: Dāk, ngōh sāi-wūn lā.
MRS. LAM: Gām, George, néih hō-mh-hóyīh dóu-laahpsaap a?
MR. LAM: Hóyīh.

Vocabulary

Housework (CD2; 11)

Below is a list of household tasks. Try reading out each item aloud. If you have the audio for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.
| jāp-chòhng | to make the bed |
| jyú-faahn  | to cook         |
| jāp-tói    | to clear the table |
| sái-wún   | to wash the dishes/wash up |
| dóu-laahpsaap | to empty the trash bin |
| máaih-yéh  | to go shopping |
| máaih-sung | to buy food (for meals) |
| sái-sāam  | to wash the clothes |
| lohng-sāam | to hang the clothes out |
| tong-sāam  | to iron the clothes |
| sou-deih   | to sweep the floor |
| kāp-chàhn  | to vacuum-clean |
| maat-chēung | to clean the windows |

The examples of housework in the list above are all expressed in *verb-object constructions*, and are thus hyphenated. Most of the translations in the right-hand column are literal translations of the verb and the object. Exceptions include *jyú-faahn*, which literally means “cook-rice,” *dóu-laahpsaap*, which literally means “pour-rubbish,” *máaih-yéh*, which literally means “buy-things,” and *kāp-chàhn*, which literally means “suck-dust.” *Jyú-faahn* is used when it is assumed that a Chinese meal is being prepared, but if the cooking is apparently not Chinese, the more general term of *jyú-yéhsihk* (lit. “cook-food”) can be used. Similarly, *sái-wún* (lit. “wash-bowls”) is used if the meal is Chinese, and bowls are used instead of plates; another expression, *sái-díp* (lit. “wash-plates”), can be used if the meal is apparently Western.

**Máaih-sung**

In the construction *máaih-sung*, the object *sung* refers specifically to raw food (meat and vegetables) which one buys in the traditional Chinese wet market to cook for lunch or dinner. It does not include food one usually buys in a supermarket such as cereals, cheese, cake, ice cream, etc. It has no exact equivalent in English.
Idioms and structures (CD2; 15)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1  dī sāam meih sāi  the clothes have yet to be washed
2  Nēih hó-mh-hóyih  Can you wash the clothes for me?
tūhng ngŏh sāi-sāam a?
3  Mā  Mom
4  Nēih tūhng ngŏh  Can you wash the clothes for me?
sāi-sāam dāk-mh-dāk a?
5  Nēih bōngsáu jāp-tói  Can you help to clear the table?
dāk-mh-dāk a?
6  Dāk, ngŏh sāi-wún lā.  OK, I’ll wash the dishes.

Meih to refer to action not yet taken  (1)

Here meih indicates action that is not yet taken. Thus, dī sāam meih sāi means “the clothes have yet to be washed.” Similarly, dī chēung meih maat means “the windows have yet to be cleaned,” and dī laapsaap meih dóu means “the bin is yet to be emptied.”

Asking a favor and responding to the request  (2, 4, 5, 6)

There are four ways of asking a favor, as follows:

(a) By using the modal hóyih in a choice-type question:

Nēih hó-mh-hóyih tūhng ngŏh sāi-wún a?  Can you wash the dishes for me?

Note that in a choice-type question, only the first syllable of a two-syllable word is repeated, thus hó-mh-hóyih but not “hóyih-mh-hóyih. Tūhng ngŏh means “for me” but note that, unlike English “for me,” it comes before the verb.

(b) By using the question-phrase dāk-mh-dāk, plus the particle a at the end of the sentence:
Néih tühng ngóh sái-wún dāk-mh-dāk a?
Is it all right if I ask you to wash the dishes for me? (Or more literally, “Wash the dishes for me, all right?”)

(c) By using Mgōi néih (“Please” or “Would you please . . .”) at the beginning of a sentence with an optional ā at the end:

Mgōi néih tühng ngóh sái-wún (ā).
Please wash the dishes for me.

(d) An alternative to using Mgōi is to use Màhfàahn. This form is more common when you are asking a favor of someone of similar or greater age and position:

Màhfàahn néih tühng ngóh sái-wún ā.
Can I trouble you to wash the dishes for me?

The most direct responses to the question in (a) are:

Hóyíh. Yes, I can.
or Mhóyíh. No, I can’t.

The most direct responses to the question in (b) are:

Dāk. Yes, it’s all right.
or Mdāk. No, it’s not all right.

Two universal positive responses to (a), (b), (c) and (d) are:

Dāk, móuh mahntàiħ. Yes, no problem.
Hóu aak. OK.

A universal negative response to (a), (b), (c) and (d) is:

Mdāk a. I’m afraid I can’t help.

Note that the sentence-final particle ā in Mdāk a helps express regret at not being able to help. You can use the expression Deuimjyuh to complement Mdāk a to sound more apologetic, for instance, Mdāk a, deui mjyuh, ngóh móyíh tühng néih sái-wún a.

Lā

The sentence-final particle lā used here helps to convey cheerful acceptance of the task.
Vocabulary

Office jobs (CD2; 12)

Below are a few small jobs one might ask junior staff in an office to do:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gei-seun</td>
<td>to mail letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dá(-jih)</td>
<td>to type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yingyan</td>
<td>to make photocopies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yingyan géi fúng seun</td>
<td>to photocopy several letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je-syū</td>
<td>to borrow books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je géi bún syū</td>
<td>to borrow several books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>máaih-fēi</td>
<td>to buy tickets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>máaih jēung fóchē fēi</td>
<td>to buy a train ticket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 1 What’s to be done?

Dora is a part-time domestic helper for the Chans. Today when she arrives at the flat she finds that Mrs. Chan has forgotten to leave her instructions about what work to do. But then the phone rings. It’s Mrs. Chan, calling to give her instructions over the phone.

Read the dialogue then fill in the job-list by putting a tick (✔) where something needs to be done and a cross (✘) where something need not be done.

MRS. CHAN: Wái, Dora àh?
DORA: Haih a.
DORA: Gám, sāi-mh-sāi máaih-sung a?
MRS. CHAN: Msāi la. Ngóh jihgéi máaih-sung dāk la.
making the beds
washing the dishes
buying food for dinner
washing the clothes
hanging the clothes out
vacuum-cleaning
cleaning the windows

Dialogue 3

(CD2; 13)
Mr. Lam is having a busy day in the office. He is looking for someone to help him with typing and photocopying.
(a) Who volunteers to help with the typing?
(b) Who volunteers to help with the photocopying?

MR. LAM: Ngóh séung wán yàhn tühng ngóh dá géi fúng seun. Bing dákhaahn a?
MR. LAM: Mgōi néih, Vicky. Gám, yáuh móuh yàhn hóyíh tühng ngóh yíngyan a?
WONG PUI WAN: Ngóh bōng néih yíngyan lā, Làhm sīnsāang.
MR. LAM: Mgōi saai, WONG Pui Wan.
WONG PUI WAN: Msāi mgōi.

Dialogue 4

(CD2; 14)
It’s Sunday and Mrs. Lam is organizing some housework.
(a) Who agrees to do the ironing?
(b) Who volunteers to sweep the floor?
(c) Who will clean the windows?

MRS. LAM: Yáuh hóu dō sāam meih tong. Bing hóyíh tühng ngóh tong-jó dī sāam a? Kenny, néih dāk-mh-dāk a?
KENNY: Mdāk a. Ngóh tái-gán jükkāuh a. Angel nē?
MRS. LAM: Mgöi, Angel. Juhng yáuh, deihhá hóu wūjōu, bīngo hóyīh tühng ngóh sou-deih a?
MR. LAM: Ngóh tühng néih sou-deih lá.
MRS. LAM: Mgöi saai, George. Gám, Kenny, néih géidímjūng tái-yūhn jūkkāu há a?
KENNY: Juhng yáuh sāam go jih jauh tái yūhn la.
MRS. LAM: Gám, néih tái yūhn jūkkāu hóng ngóh maat-jó dī chēung dāk-mh-dāk a?
KENNY: Dāk, móuh mahntāih.

Idioms and structures (CD2; 15)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. Ngóh séung wán yàhn tühng ngóh dá gēi fūng seun. Bīngo dākhāahn a? I am looking for someone to type several letters for me. Who is free?
2. Yáuh móuh yàhn hóyīh tühng ngóh yíngyan a? Is there anyone who can help me do some photocopying?
3. Ngóh bōng néih yíngyan lá. I’ll help you to do the photocopying.
4. Mgöi saai. Thank you so much.
5. Msái mgöi. You are welcome./Not at all. (A conventional response to mgöi, which literally means “There’s no need to thank me.”)
6. Bīngo hóyīh tühng ngóh tong-jó dī sāam a? Who can help me get the clothes ironed?
7. Juhng yáuh … And also …
8. deihhá hóu wūjōu the floor is dirty
9. Néih géidímjūng tái-yūhn jūkkāu há a? When will you finish watching soccer?
10. Juhng yáuh sāam go jih jauh tái yūhn laak. Fifteen more minutes to go, and then I’ll finish watching (soccer).
Asking for a volunteer to help (1, 2)

One way to ask for a volunteer to help get something done is to say what you want done and then ask who is free:

Ngóh séung wán yàhn tùhng ngóh dá géi füng seun.
Bĩngo dákhaahn a?
I am looking for someone to type several letters for me.
Who is free?

Wán in the phrase wán yàhn is a verb which means “to look for.” Yàhn, on the other hand, is a noun of an indefinite nature in this context, and can thus be translated into either “someone” or “people.” The modal verb séung used before the phrase can be translated into “want to” or “wish to.”

Another way to ask around for a volunteer is to use the question word bĩngo “who” with the modal hóyiḥ, as below:

Bĩngo hóyiḥ tùhng ngóh dá géi füng seun a?
Who can help me type a few letters?

A third way to make an open request for a favor is to use the question phrase Yáuh móuh yàhn “Is there anybody?” with the modal hóyiḥ to form a question, as follows:

Yáuh móuh yàhn hóyiḥ tùhng ngóh dá-jíh a?
Is there anyone who can do some typing for me?

The verbal particle saai (4)

The particle saai is used with a verb and conveys the meaning of “completely.” Thus, mgōi saai is an emphatic form of “thank you” for a favor, while dōjeh saai is an emphatic form of “thank you” for a gift.

Anticipating completion of action (6)

Unit 6 introduced the use of the aspect marker -jó to refer to completed action. Sometimes when we ask people to do a favor we can use the aspect marker -jó with the verb to indicate anticipation of some action being completed soon. This use is not unlike the notion of “getting something done” in English. Below are two examples:
Néih hó-mh-hóyíh tühng ngóh dóu-jó dī laahpsaap a?
Could you get the trash bin emptied for me, please?

Bīngo hóyíh tühng ngóh gei-jó dī seun a?
Can somebody get these letters posted for me, please?

Hóu

_Hóu_ in deihhà _hóu wūjōu_ functions as an adverb meaning “very,” to qualify the adjective _wūjōu_ when it is stressed (i.e. when the tone and segment is fully pronounced). But when it is _not_ stressed, _hóu_ in colloquial Cantonese does not carry the meaning of “very.” So _hóu wūjōu_ simply means “dirty” rather than “very dirty.”

The verbal particle _yūhn_

_Yūhn_ is a particle used after a verb to indicate finishing an action. It is different from the aspect marker _-jó_ in that it is used to specify the finishing time of an action in progress. The question in Dialogue 4: _néih géidímjūng tái-yūhn jūkkàuh a?_ asks when Kenny will finish watching soccer, as he is watching while his mother is talking to him. Similarly, if you telephoned your friend and found that he was having dinner, then you could ask: _Néih géidímjūng sihk yūhn faahn a?_ “When will you finish eating your dinner?” If you telephoned your friend for a chat in the evening, you might start the conversation by asking: _Néih sihk-jó faahn meih a?_ “Have you eaten your dinner?” This habit of asking whether somebody has had a meal, by the way, is a social norm among Cantonese speakers, and can be compared to English people talking about the weather as an opener to a conversation.

Juhng yáuh … jauh

_Juhng yáuh_ in this context means “there is still,” with _yáuh_ in its existential use, while _jauh_ is used to mean “and then,” leading on to the consequence of a condition. Thus, _juhng yáuh sāam go jih jauh tái yūhn jūkkàuh laak_ literally means “There are fifteen more minutes to go and then I’ll finish watching soccer.”
Exercise 2 Mr. Nice Guy

Nick is a very nice person and never says no to a favor asked. You want Nick to do three things for you: type two letters, borrow three books from the library, and buy a train ticket. Complete the conversation with polite requests for favors.

YOU: Nick, néih dā-k-mh-dāk-haahn tū-hng ngōh jouh géi yeuhng yēh a?
NICK: Dāk, móuh mahntāih.
YOU: (a) Néih hō-mh-hōyīh bōng ngōh …
NICK: Hōyīh.
YOU: (b) Gám, …
NICK: (c)
YOU: (d)
NICK: (e)
YOU: Mgōi saai, Nick.
NICK: (f)

Exercise 3 The selfish family

The members of the Chow family are very selfish, and seldom offer to help with housework. This is another typical evening when Mrs. Chow is appealing in vain to her family for help. Everyone claims that he or she is busy doing something else. Referring to the picture, complete the conversation.

MRS. CHOW: Bīngō dā-k-haahn bōng ngōh sāi-wūn a?
MRS. CHOW: Gám, néih nē, Kelvin?
KELVIN: (a) Ngōh dōu mdā-k-haahn a. Ngōh …
MRS. CHOW: Jane tū-hng Kelvin dōu mdā-k-haahn. Gám, néih bōng ngōh sāi-wūn dāk-mh-dāk a, bāh-bā?
MR. CHOW: (b) Deui mjyuh …
Recognizing Chinese characters

煮飯  to cook meals
洗碗  to wash bowls
買餸  to buy food for meals
洗衣  to wash the clothes
掛衣  to hang (the) clothes (out)
燙衣服 to iron the clothes
掃地  to sweep the floor
吸塵  to vacuum-clean
抹窗  to clean the windows
Communicative activities

1. Find out from a Cantonese-speaking partner about who does what jobs around his or her home. Who makes the bed? Who washes the dishes? Who vacuums?

2. Suppose that you are trying to get out of doing work around the place where you live. With a partner take the role of the reluctant or lazy household member and say why you cannot do what he or she is asking you to do.

Cultural point

Friendship and obligation are viewed in a distinctly different way in Chinese culture as compared with the West. Friendships often take longer to develop, but when they are established expected obligations are typically stronger. The Chinese sometimes see Western friendliness as superficial. When you are traveling to a faraway place, it is common for Chinese friends to ask you to take a package with you for one of their friends. Once you establish a relationship, favors are freely requested and given between friends.
Unit Ten
Hái bǐndouh?
Where is it?

In Unit 10 you will learn about:

• discussing where an object is
• discussing where a building is
• using dú to indicate succeeding in an action
Dialogue 1

The Chans are an untidy family. The children, Sylvan and Sally, often leave things lying around in odd places. Their father Mr. Chan is not much better. Mrs. Chan is probably the only organized person in the house. At the moment Sally is about to go out, and is desperately trying to find her handbag and her gloves.

(a) Where is Sally’s handbag?
(b) Where are her gloves?

SALLY: Māmih, ngóh go sáudóí mgin-jó a. Néih jī-mh-jī ngóh go sáudóí hái bīndouh a?

MRS. CHAN: Nē! Néih go sáudóí hái sófá seuhungmihn a.


MRS. CHAN: Néih deui sáumaht hái chàhg bi seuhungmihn a. Gin-mh-gin a?

SALLY: Gin dóu la. Mgōi saai, māmih.

Dialogue 2

Mr. Chan is hunting around for his eyeglasses while his son Sylvan is frantically searching for his missing comb and socks.

(a) Where are Mr. Chan’s eyeglasses?
(b) Where is Sylvan’s comb?
(c) Where are Sylvan’s socks?

MR. CHAN: Taai-táai a, ngóh wán mdóu ngóh go ngáahngéng a!

MRS. CHAN: Nē! Néih go ngáahngéng mhaih hái chàhgēi seuhung-mihn lō! Gin-mh-gin a?

MR. CHAN: Bīndouh a? ... Gin dóu la. Hái chàhgēi seuhung-mihn à ma.

SYLVAN: Māmih, néih yáuh móuh gin dóu ngóh bá sō a? Ngóh bá sō mgin-jó a.

MRS. CHAN: Néih bá sō âh? Nē! Néih bá sō mhaih hái dihnsi-gēi seuhungmihn lō!

SYLVAN: Haih wo. Gám, ngóh deui maht nē? Néih gin-mh-gin a?
SYLVAN: Gin dòu la. Mgöi, māmih.

Vocabulary

**Personal belongings (CD2; 18)**

Below are some things commonly found at home. They are presented with their assigned classifiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>classifier</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yä́t go sáudóí</td>
<td>a handbag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t go ngānbnāau</td>
<td>a purse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t go/fu ngáahngéng</td>
<td>a pair of eyeglasses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t deui maht</td>
<td>a pair of socks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t deui sáumaht</td>
<td>a pair of gloves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t deui tōhái</td>
<td>a pair of slippers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t jek maht/sáumaht/tōhái</td>
<td>a sock/glove/slipper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t ji bāt</td>
<td>a pen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t bá jě</td>
<td>an umbrella</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t bá sō</td>
<td>a comb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t go séuibūi</td>
<td>a glass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t go chāhbūi</td>
<td>a cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t bouh luhkỳínggēi</td>
<td>a video-recorder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t bèng luhkỳíngdáai</td>
<td>a video-tape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t jek DVD-dāi</td>
<td>a DVD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yä́t bouh DVD-gēi</td>
<td>a DVD player</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classifiers**

Apart from the most common classifier go, which is used for “roundish” objects and many other less obviously roundish ones such as people (yä́t go yāhn) and eyeglasses (yä́t go ngáahngéng), most classifiers are rationally determined. In the examples given above, yä́t deui is literally “a pair,” while jek is the classifier for single pieces of footwear or gloves. Ji is used for long, slender objects which are cylindrical in shape, for instance yä́t ji bāt “a pen,” while bá is used for long, slender objects that are not cylindrical, such as yä́t bá jě “an umbrella” and yä́t bá sō “a comb.”
Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. **mgin-jó**
   - has gone missing/is missing

2. **Néih ji-mh-jí ngóh go sóudóí hái bìndóuh a?**
   - Do you know where my handbag is?

3. **Néih go sóudóí hái sōfá seuhngmihn a.**
   - Your handbag is on the sofa.

4. **wán mdóu**
   - cannot find

5. **Gin-mh-gin a?**
   - Do you see them?

6. **Gin dōu la.**
   - I can see them now.

7. **Néih go ngáahngéng mhaih hái chàhgéi seuhngmihn lō?**
   - Aren’t those your glasses on the coffee table?

8. **Hái chàhgéi seuhngmihn à ma.**
   - On the coffee table, as you said.

9. **néih yáuh móuh gin dōu ngóh bá sō a?**
   - Have you seen my comb?

10. **Néih bá sō àh?**
    - Did you say your comb?

**Mgin-jó**

(1)

The verb **gin** means “to see,” and the verb **mgin** “to lose” is formed from it by adding the negative prefix **m-**. **Mgin** is very often used with the aspect marker **-jó**, which indicates completion of action, to form the expression **mgin-jó**. In its stative use, describing the state of something, **mgin-jó** would translate into English as “missing,” as in **ngóh go sóudóí mgin-jó** “My handbag is missing.” In its verbal use **mgin-jó** would translate into English as “has/have lost,” as in **Ngóh mgin-jó ngóh go sóudóí** “I have lost my handbag.”
Asking where something is

To ask where something is, the question phrase **hái bîndouh** is used with the interrogative particle **a**. Note particularly the word order: the question phrase comes at the end of the sentence.

- **Ngóh deui töhâai hái bîndouh a?**
  Where are my slippers?

- **Néih jî-mh-jî ngóh go sáudói hái bîndouh a?**
  Do you know where my handbag is?

Saying where an object is

To indicate location in Cantonese, the verbal form of the word **hái** is used, together with an adverb of location. However, the use is different from the use of prepositions in English. To indicate location, English employs the following pattern:

\[
\text{Noun A} \quad \text{Verb “to be”} \quad \text{Preposition} \quad \text{Noun B}
\]

The book is on the coffee table.

In Cantonese, the constituent parts come in a different order, as follows:

\[
\text{Noun A} \quad \text{hái} \quad \text{Noun B} \quad \text{Adverb of location}
\]

- **Bún syū hái jêung châhgêi sehngmihn.**
  The book is under the coffee table.

- **Bún syū hái jêung châhgêi sehngmihn.**
  The book is on the coffee table.

- **Bún syū hái jêung châhgêi hahmihn.**
  The book is under the coffee table.
Jëung chàhgëi hái jëung sòfá gaaklèih.
The coffee table is beside the sofa.

Go dihnsihgëi hái jëung sòfá chihnmihn.
The TV set is in front of the sofa.

Go syûgá hái jëung sòfá hauhmihn.
The bookshelves are behind the sofa.

To say Object A is between Object B and Object C, again the adverb of location comes at the end, as follows:

Jëung sòfá hái jëung chàhgëi tûng jëung önlokhýí jûnggåan.
The sofa is between the coffee table and the easy chair.

To say something (say, the book) is on the floor, you can say:

Bûn syû hái deihhá seuhngmihn.
or simply:

Bûn syû hái deihhá.

The verbal particle dóu (4, 6)
The verbal particle dóu is often used after a verb to indicate success in doing something. For example, the verb wán means “to look for” and wán dóu means “to be able to find.” Hence Ngóh wán dóu go sáudóí la is “I found the handbag.” The negative form of wán dóu is formed by adding the negative prefix m- to dóu and the phrase becomes wán mdóu, which translates into “to fail to find.” Thus, Ngóh wán mdóu deui sáumaht is “I cannot find the gloves.” Later in Dialogue 1, Gin dóu la in response to the question Gin-mh-gin a? stresses the fact that one can now see something which one failed to see a minute before.

Mhaih ... lô! (7)
The structure mhaih ... lô! gives positive emphasis. Although mhaih is negative by itself, the sentence-final particle lô turns the whole structure positive. This structure can be compared to the rhetorical question of “Aren’t those your glasses lying on the coffee table?” Another example can be found later in Dialogue 2: Néih bá sôi mhaih hái dihnsihgëi seuhngmihn lô! “Isn’t that your comb on top of the television?”
The double particle ā ma (8)

ā ma are two particles used together at the end of a statement which repeats another speaker’s message to acknowledge it. In Dialogue 2, Mrs. Chan tells Mr. Chan his glasses are on the coffee table (hái chàhgēi seuhungmihn), and when Mr. Chan finally finds his glasses he acknowledges receipt of the message by saying Hái chàhgēi seuhungmihn ā ma “On the coffee table, as you said.”

Yáuh móuh ... dóu? (9)

The verb gin is very often used with the verbal particle dóu to mean “to have seen,” with emphasis on someone having seen something in the immediate past. To form a choice-type question with gin dóu, the verbs yáuh and móuh are used. Hence néih yáuh móuh gin dóu ngóh bá sō a? “Have you seen my comb?”

Question with àh (10)

Here the question with àh (see Unit 5, p. 84) acknowledges the first question, and buys time for a reply. In Dialogue 2, Sylvan asks the question Néih yáuh móuh gin dóu ngóh bá sō a?, and Mrs. Chan responds by saying Néih bá sō àh?, to give herself time to look around for the comb. Similarly, if the question was Néih yáuh móuh gin dóu Sylvan bún syū a?, then the response would be Sylvan bún syū àh?

Vocabulary

Shops (CD2; 19)

Below is a list of different shops. Try reading out each item aloud. If you have the audio for this book, model your pronunciation on the recording.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mànhgeuihdim</th>
<th>stationery shop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>syūdim/syūgūk</td>
<td>bookstore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tòhnggwódim</td>
<td>sweet shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fādim</td>
<td>flower shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fuhkjöngdim</td>
<td>dress shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mihnbaaupou</td>
<td>bakery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feifaatpou</td>
<td>barber’s shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haaiphou</td>
<td>shoe shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dihnheipou</td>
<td>electrical appliance store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yeuhkfohng</td>
<td>drugstore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chiukapsihcheuhng</td>
<td>supermarket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Shop/store**

Most of the items in the list above are compound nouns ending either in dim or pou, both of which mean “shop” or “store.” For example, “sweets” is tohnggwó, and a “sweet shop” is tohnggwÓdim. Two exceptions are yeuhkfohng “drugstore,” in which fôhng (lit. “room”) is used, and chiukapsihcheuhng, which is a literal translation of supermarket, with chi ukâp meaning “super” and sihcheuhng meaning “market.” Another exception is the alternative term for “bookstore,” syûgûk, in which gûk is used to refer to a large shop. All these shops use the classifier gaan, hence yât gāan mihnbaaupou, yât gāan dihnheipou, and so on.

---

**Dialogue 3**

**CD2; 20**

Auntie Kate has come to visit the Chans from Canada, and is staying with them for a month. She is asking Sally where she can buy certain things.

(a) Where is the shoe shop that Sally recommends?
(b) How far away is it?
(c) Where is the dress shop that Sally recommends?

**AUNTIE KATE:** Sally, ngóh séung máaih deui hàaih. Néih jî-mh-jî bîndouh yáuh hàaihpou a?

**SALLY:** Ngóh jî hái deihtitjaahm deuimihn yáuh yât gään hàaihpou. Gódouh dî hàaih géi leng ga.

**AUNTIE KATE:** Gám, gāan hàaihpou káhn-mh-káhn nîdouh ga?
Dialogue 4

(CD2; 21)

Today Auntie Kate wants to see a movie, and asks Sylvan about the nearest movie theater.

(a) What is the name of the nearest movie theater?
(b) How long does it take to walk there?
(c) How long does it take to go by taxi?

AUNTIE KATE: Sylvan, ngóh séung heui tâi chêu-hei. Lêih ngükkei jeui kâhn gään heiyún hái bîndouh a?
SYLVAN: Lêih nîdouh jeui kâhn gään heiyún haïh Capitol Cinema. Båtgwo dôu gêi yûhn a, yiu hàahng daaihyeuk ngh go jih sînji douh a.
AUNTIE KATE: Gám, daap dîksi yiu géinoih a?
SYLVAN: Daap dîksi jauh hóu faai, léuhng go jih jauh heui douh laak.

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. Néih jî-mh-ji bîndouh yáuh hàaihpóu a? Do you know where I can find a shoe store?
2. Hái deihjitjaahm deuimihn yáuh yät gään hàaihpóu. There’s a shoe store opposite the subway station.
3. Ngóh juhng séung máaih gêi gihn sāam. I also want to buy some clothes.
4 Gám, ngāam saai laak! That’s great!
5 Ngóh sеung heui tái I want to go see a movie.
    chēut-hei. (Chēut is the classifier for hei or dihnyīng.)
6 Lèih ngūkkéi jeui káhn Where is the nearest movie
gāan heiyún hái bǐndouh a? theater to your house?
7 Bātgwo dōu gēi yûhn a. Even so it’s quite far away.
8 Yiù hàahng daaihyeuk It takes about 25 minutes to
    ngh go jih sīnji douh a. walk there.

Location (1, 2)

To indicate the location of buildings, we use similar structures to those discussed earlier in this unit. Below are several examples using a movie theater (heiyún) and a supermarket (chūkāpsīchēuhng) as two points of orientation.

(Gāan) mihnbaaupóu hái (gāan) heiyún gaaklēih. The bakery is beside the movie theater.

(Gāan) fādim hái (gāan) heiyún deuimihn. The flower shop is opposite the movie theater.

(Gāan) syūdim hái (gāan) chī ukāp sīchēuhng chēhdeuimihn. The bookstore is diagonally across from the supermarket.

(Gāan) yeuhkfòhng hái (gāan) fādim tūhng (gāan) hàaihpóu jūnggāan. The drugstore is between the flower shop and the shoe store.

(Gāan) dihnheipóu hái (gāan) heiyūhn fuhgahn. The electrical appliance shop is near the movie theater.

To ask whether there is a certain kind of shop nearby, the existential verbs yáuh and móuh are used, as follows:

Nǐdouh fuhgahn yáuh móuh yeuhkfòhng a? Is there a drugstore nearby?

An alternative is to use the question word bǐndouh “where”:

Fuhgahn bǐndouh yáuh yeuhkfòhng a? Where can I find a drugstore around here?
To answer these questions, the information about the whereabouts is usually put at the beginning of the sentence:

*Hái heiyúhn deuimihn yáuh yāt gāan yeuhkfôhng.*
There is a drugstore opposite the movie theater.

**Exercise 1 Where is everything?**

Translate into Cantonese the following statements about where things are. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) The book is on the easy chair.

*Bún syú hái jēung önlohookí seuhngmihn.*

(b) The umbrella is beside the sofa.

(c) The glasses are on the floor.

(d) The cup is on the bookshelves.

(e) The slippers are under the coffee table.

(f) The glass is on the TV set.

(g) The pen is between the glass and the cup.

**Géi gihn sāam**

*Sāam* in the phrase *géi gihn sāam* refers to items of clothing, and *gihn* is the classifier for *sāam*.

**Ngāam saai laak**

In the idiomatic expression *ngāam saai laak*, the word *ngāam* is a verb which means “to fit” while *saai* is a particle which means “completely,” and the expression literally means “it fits perfectly well (with my plans).”

**Serial construction**

As discussed in previous units, in Cantonese two or more verbs can be used consecutively to express a series of actions. In this example the three verbs *séung* “to want to,” *heui* “to go,” and *táí* “to see” are used serially.
Distances

The Cantonese words for “near” and “far” are káhn and yúhn respectively, but structurally they are used slightly differently. The adjective káhn can be used alone, as below:

Gaan mihnbaupou hou káhn.
The bakery is very near.

It can also be used before a point of reference:

Gaan mihnbaupou hou káhn ngükkéi.
The bakery is near home.

It can also be used with the word lèih, which functions like the English preposition “from,” in which case káhn comes after the point of reference:

Gaan mihnbaupou lèih ngükkéi hou káhn.
The bakery is near home.

As for yúhn, it can be used either alone or with the word lèih, but it cannot be used before the point of reference. Below are two examples:

Gaan fādim hou yúhn.
The flower shop is far away.

Gaan fādim lèih ngükkéi hou yúhn.
The flower shop is far from home.

To ask whether a shop is near or far away, the adjective káhn or yúhn is reduplicated in a choice-type question:

Gaan fēifaatpou káhn-mh-káhn nidouh a?
Is the barber’s shop near here?

Gaan tôhnggwódim lèih nidouh yúhn-mh-yúhn a?
Is the sweet shop far from here?

Dōu

Here the word dōu is used to mark the apparent contrast between the expression jeui káhn gāan heiyún “the nearest movie theater” and géi yúhn “quite far away.” More explicitly, it means “Even if I say it’s the nearest movie theater it is quite a long distance away.”
Subjective distances

To indicate how long it takes to go, say, on foot, to a certain destination, two kinds of pattern are used, depending on whether the speaker thinks it is near or far away:

**(Gāan) mihnbaaupóu hàahng ngh fänjüng jauh dou laak.**
It only takes five minutes to walk to the bakery.

**(Gāan) fādim yiu hàahng bun go jüngtāuh sīnji dou.**
It’s half-an-hour’s walk to go to the flower shop.

The use of the pattern yiu ... sīnji to indicate the considerable effort required to get a task accomplished and the use of the pattern jauh ... laak to emphasize the ease of doing something were discussed in Unit 7.

Exercise 2 Where are the shops?

Richard has just moved into a new flat in a housing estate. Today, he wants to do some shopping, but as he is not very familiar with the nearby shops, he asks his neighbor Kathy to give him some directions. Read the dialogue between Richard and Kathy. Then help Richard to complete the sketch map so that he can find the shops easily.

**RICHARD:** Kathy, ngōh séung máaih géi bún syū. Néih jī-mh-jī fuhgahn bīndouh yāuh syūgǔk a?

**KATHY:** Ngōh jīdou hái chīukápsihchéuhng gaaklèih, fādim deuimihn yāuh yāt gāan syūgǔk. Gódouh géi dō syū maaiah ga.

**RICHARD:** Gám, hái syūgǔk fuhgahn yāuh móuh yeuhkfōhng a?

**KATHY:** Yáuh. Jauh hái syūgǔk chèhdeuimihn, fādim gaaklèih jauh yāuh gāan yeuhkfōhng laak.

**RICHARD:** Ngōh juhng séung máaih dī dihnhei. Jeui kāhn gāan dihnheipóu hái bīndouh a?

**KATHY:** Dihnheipóu āh? Jeui kāhn gó gāan jauh haih hái heiyūn chèhdeuimihn, hàaihpóu gaaklèih.

**RICHARD:** Gám, mihnbaaupóu nē? Bīndouh yāuh mihnbaaupóu a?

**KATHY:** Hái heiyūn deuimihn, chīukápsihchéuhng gaaklèih mhaih yāuh mihnbaaupóu lō!

**RICHARD:** Hái chīukápsihchéuhng gaaklèih āh? Hóu là. Juhng yāuh, fuhgahn yāuh móuh tōhnggwódim a? Ngōh séung máaih dī tōhnggwó.
Exercise 3 The scene of the crime

The Poons came home on Saturday evening to find that their house had been burgled and the usually orderly sitting room was in a mess. They telephoned the police, and Inspector Ko and his team arrived shortly after. Inspector Ko is examining the things scattered all over the sitting room and using his recorder to make a list of where different objects are found. Referring to the picture, complete Inspector Ko’s monologue.

Hái sōfá seuhngmihn yáuh yāt go sáudói, yāt jek maht …
Exercise 4 The nearest shop

Your friend CHING Ping from Guangzhou is staying with you for a few weeks. Before he leaves, he wants to do some shopping. He is asking you to recommend some nearby shops where he can buy certain things. Referring to the map, complete the dialogue.
CHING PING: Ngóh séung máaih dī sāam. Nidouh fuhgahn yáuh móuh fuhkjöngdim a?

YOU: Yáuh. Yáuh géi gāan, Tim Tim là, Wing Sing la, tūhng Honest.

CHING PING: Gám, bīn gāan jeui káhn a?

YOU: (a)

CHING PING: Gám, nī gāan haih-mh-haih jeui daaih a?

YOU: (b)

CHING PING: Gám, bīn gāan jeui daaih a?

YOU: (c)

CHING PING: Nī gāan yúhn-mh-yúhn a?

YOU: (d)

CHING PING: Ngóh juhng séung máaih yāt deui hàaih. Nidouh fuhgahn yáuh móuh hàaihpóu a?

YOU: (e)

CHING PING: Gám, léuhng gāan bīn gāan káhn-dī a?

YOU: (f)

CHING PING: Yiu hàahng géi noih?

YOU: (g)

Recognizing Chinese characters

文具店 stationery shop
書店 bookstore
糖果店 sweet shop
花店 flower shop
服裝店 dress shop
藥店(房) drugstore
超級市場 supermarket
Communicative activities

1. Have a partner describe his or her neighborhood or another place of interest. Ask where places are in relation to each other.
2. Sketch out a room in your home and then describe the details of it to a partner. Your partner sketches it as you speak. When you have finished, compare your sketches.

Cultural point

Shops and shopping in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is among the most famous shopping destinations in the world. Its dense population and its place as a major import-export hub allow just about any kind of shop to exist. Hong Kong has it all: world class boutiques, upscale shopping centers, street markets, luxury goods markets, and cutting edge electronics. Traditionally, Hong Kong—like many Chinese cities—had districts specializing in certain kinds of goods. Some of these districts still exist. For example, Mongkok district is known for its electronics and cameras. The Jade Market is in the Yau Ma Tei district at Kansu and Battery streets. In these specialty districts, you see shop after shop selling similar products.
In Unit 11 you will learn about:

- ordering food and asking for the bill
- stating preferences
Dialogue 1

(CD2; 23)
John is going to his Cantonese class, which begins at 6:15 p.m. It’s now 6 p.m., and he is feeling hungry, so he stops by a noodle shop to get something to eat.

(a) What does John order?
(b) What does the waiter suggest that John order?
(c) How much does John pay for his food?

WAITER: Sĩnsāang, sihk dī mātyēh a?
JOHN: Mgōi néih yāt wūn wāhntāmihnh, tūhng yāt wūn gahpdāijūk.
JOHN: Hōu lā, yiu dihp yàuhchoi tīm lā.

(Some time later.)

JOHN: Fógei, mgōi tái-sou.
WAITER: Júngguhung y’ah baat mān. Chēutmihn bēi lā.

Dialogue 2

(CD2; 24)
It’s Sunday and the Lams have gone to their favorite tea-house for a dīmsām lunch. They are being greeted by a waiter.

(a) What kinds of tea do the Lams order?
(b) What kinds of dīmsām do they order?
(c) How much does the food cost?
(d) How much does Mr. Lam pay?

WAITER: Sĩnsāang, géidō wāi a?
MR. LAM: Sei wāi, mgōi.
WAITER: Sei wāi āh? Nidouh lā.
MR. LAM: Hōu, mgōi.
WAITER: Yām mātyēh chāh a?
MRS. LAM: Mgōi yāt wūh hēungpīn, yāt wūh bóulēi ā.

(After a few minutes the waiter comes back with the teas.)
WAITER: Yāt wūh hēungpīn, yāt wūh bóulēi. Chīng mahn giu dī mātyēh dīmsām a?
MRS. LAM: Mgòi léuhng lùhng hāgāau, yät lùhng siúmái, tūhng léuhng lùhng chāsiubāau.

KENNY: Yiu dō yät dihp daahntāat.

ANGE: Tūnhngmàaih yät lùhng fāngwó.

WAITER: Hóu, léuhng lùhng hāgāau, yät lùhng siúmái, yät lùhng fāngwó, léuhng lùhng chāsiubāau, tūhng yät dihp daahntāat.

(Some time later the Lams are ready to go.)

MR. LAM: Fógei, mgòi màaih-dāan.

WAITER: Hóu.

(The waiter returns.)

WAITER: Dōjeh yät-baak gáu-sahp yih mān.


WAITER: Dōjeh.

Vocabulary

In a noodle shop (CD2; 25)

The Chinese restaurants in Hong Kong mainly serve Cantonese-style food, unless otherwise specified. Also commonly found in Hong Kong are small Cantonese-style noodle shops, where noodles, rice, and congee (a kind of rice porridge commonly eaten in south-east Asia) are served. In a noodle shop, food is ordered by the container, such as bowls and plates. Below is a list of common dishes served in a Cantonese-style noodle shop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yät wún wāhntānmihn</th>
<th>a bowl of won-ton noodles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yät wún yūhdáanmihn</td>
<td>a bowl of fish-ball noodles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yät wūn gahpdāijūk</td>
<td>a bowl of congee with mixed meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yät wūn ngāuhyuhkjūk</td>
<td>a bowl of congee with beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yät dihp yàuhchoi</td>
<td>a plate of vegetables with oyster sauce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a tea-house (CD2; 26)

One of the favorite pastimes of Cantonese people is to go to a tea-house in a large group for a hearty meal of dīmsām (dumplings either steamed in bamboo baskets or fried and then served on a plate)
always accompanied by a choice of Chinese teas. When Cantonese speakers say *heui yám-chàh*, which literally means “go-drink-tea,” they mean having *dímsām* in a tea-house.

When people go to a tea-house, after sitting down at a table, they first order tea, and then they order *dímsām* either from *dímsām* trolleys or by placing an order through a waiter (*fógei*). Tea is ordered by the pot (*wūh*), and *dímsām* are ordered either by the bamboo basket (*lūhng*) or by the plate (*dihp*). Below is a list of some of the most popular Chinese teas and *dímsām* offered in a tea-house.

### Chinese teas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yāt wūh bóuléi</th>
<th>a pot of Pu-erh (dark) tea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yāt wūh hēungpín</td>
<td>a pot of jasmine tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt wūh lūhngjéng</td>
<td>a pot of Lung-ching (light) tea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dímsam (CD2; 27)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yāt lūhng hāgáau</th>
<th>a basket of steamed shrimp dumplings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yāt lūhng siiumáai</td>
<td>a basket of steamed pork dumplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt lūhng chāsiubāau</td>
<td>a basket of steamed barbecued-pork buns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt lūhng fāngwó</td>
<td>a basket of steamed shrimp and bamboo-shoot dumplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt dihp chēungyún</td>
<td>a plate of spring rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt dihp daahntāat</td>
<td>a plate of custard tarts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Asking for the bill

After eating, you ask for the bill. There are two ways to ask for the bill in Cantonese, depending on the context. In a noodle shop, we usually say *Mgōi tài-sou!*, which literally means “Please see amount!,” i.e. “Please check the amount that I have to pay.” This is because in a small noodle shop the convention is for the waiter to call out an amount to notify the cashier what sum of money he will be receiving. The alternative expression *Mgōi màaih-dāan!* is used in a bigger eating place such as a restaurant or tea-house, where proper bills are issued by the cashier and brought to the table by the waiter—hence the word *dāan* “bill.” This expression literally means “Please close (the) bill.”
Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. **Yiu-mh-yiu dihp yàuhchoi tīm a?** Do you want a plate of yàuhchoi as well?
2. **Chēutmihn béi lā!** Please pay at the front.
3. **Yám mātyēh chàh a?** What tea would you like to drink?
4. **Yiu dō yāt dihp daahntāat.** A plate of custard tarts, too.
5. **Tūhngmàaih yāt lūhng fángwó.** And a basket of Fangwo.
6. **Msái jáau laak.** Keep the change.

**Suggesting something additional**

The word *tīm* means “in addition” and is used for suggesting an additional item. It is always put at the end of a proposition, hence **Yiu-mh-yiu dihp yàuhchoi tīm a?** and **yiu dihp yàuhchoi tīm lā**, but never ***ngóh tīm yiu yāt dihp yàuhchoi**.

**Chēutmihn**

Chēutmihn is another adverb of location: it means “outside,” while the word for “inside” is lēuihmihn. Here, in the context of the noodle shop, the waiter is asking the customer to “pay outside” because conventionally he does not bring the customer the bill. The customer has to go to the cashier, who usually sits at the entrance to the shop.

**Asking for something additional**

The word *dō* is used with a verb to suggest either an addition or an extension to the action concerned. For example, **Yiu dō yāt dihp daahntāat** means “(I) also want a plate of custard tarts,” while **Ngóh séung dá dō bun go jūngtāuh móhngkāuh** means “I want to play tennis for half an hour more.” Notice that *dō* is always positioned immediately after the verb.
To summarize, there are three ways to ask for an additional item, say, a plate of custard tarts. The difference is mostly a matter of style and emphasis.

Ngóh séung yiu dō yāt dihp daahntāat.
Ngóh séung yiu (yāt) dihp daahntāat tīm.
Ngóh juhng séung yiu (yāt) dihp daahntāat.

See Unit 9 (pp. 151 and 153) for juhng as “also.”

Msái jáau laak

The idiom Msái jáau laak has exactly the same function as “Keep the change” in English, though they have different literal meanings. The verb jáau means “to give money back as change,” and so Msái jáau laak more explicitly means “There is no need for you to give me the change.”

Vocabulary

At a fast-food shop (CD2; 28)

Below is some of the food one might eat at a fast-food shop. Note the classifier used for each item.

Snacks

| yāt go honbóubāau | a hamburger |
| yāt go jīsi honbóubāau | a cheeseburger |
| yāt go yūhláuhbāau | a fishburger |
| yāt jek yihtgáu | a hot-dog |
| yāt bāau syūhtiu | a packet of chips/French fries |

Drinks

| yāt būi chāh | a cup of tea |
| yāt būi gafē | a cup of coffee |
| yāt būi hōlohk | a cup of cola |
| yāt būi chaangjāp | a cup of orange juice |
As most fast-food shops are self-service, there is not much negotiation between the customer and the salesperson. One question, though, that the salesperson often asks the customer is: "Hái (nǐ) douh sihk dihng lík jáu a?" which means “Eat-in or take-away?”

Exercise 1 Taking food orders
Imagine you work for a fast-food shop. Read or listen to the dialogue. Then note down the food items ordered.

CUSTOMER: Mgöi néih, ngóh séung yiu léuhng go honbóubāau, sāam go yihtgáu, tūhng léuhng bàau syūhtiú.
YOU: Hóu. Léuhng go honbóubāau, sāam go yihtgáu, tūhng léuhng bàau syūhtiú. Syūhtiú yiu daaih dihng sai a?
CUSTOMER: Yiu daaih ge.
YOU: Gám, yiu-mh-yiu dī yēh yám tīm a?
YOU: Dāk. Léuhng būi chāh, léuhng būi gafē, tūhng yāt būi cháangjāp.

Dialogue 3

(CD2; 29)
Carmen is on her way to her Cantonese lesson. She is hungry and stops by a fast-food shop.

(a) What does Carmen buy?
(b) Is she eating in or taking the food away?
(c) How much does the food cost?

SALESPERSON: Füruihng gwōnglàhm.
CARMEN: Mgöi bēi yāt go jisí honbóubāau, yāt bàau daaih syūhtiú, tūhng yāt būi sai hōlohk.
SALESPERSON: Hài douh sihk dihng lík jáu a?
CARMEN: Līk jáu ga.
SALESPERSON: Dōjeh yi sahp-chāt go bun.
CARMEN: Nidouh sāām-sahp mān.
SALESPERSON: Dōjeh. Jáau fāan léuhng go bun.
CARMEN: Mgöi.
Carmen is discussing with LEIH Man Chung the kinds of food they like.

(a) Which does Carmen prefer, Japanese food or Chinese food?
(b) Which does LEIH Man Chung prefer, Chinese food or French food?
(c) What is John's favorite food?

LEIH MAN CHUNG: Carmen, néih jüng-mh-jüngyi sihk Yahtbún choi a?
CARMEN: Jüngyi a. Ngóh hóu jüngyi sihk Yahtbún choi ga.
LEIH MAN CHUNG: Gám, néih haih-mh-haih jeui jüngyi sihk Yahtbún choi a?
CARMEN: Mhaih wo. Ngóh dòu hóu jüngyi sihk Jünggwok choi wo.
LEIH MAN CHUNG: Gám, néih jüngyi bín yeuhng dō-dī a?
CARMEN: Yahtbún choi tühng Jünggwok choi, ngóh dòuhaih jüngyi Jünggwok choi dō-dī. Néih nē, LEIH Man Chung?
CARMEN: Gám néih tühng John yāt yeuhng laak. John dòu haih jeui jüngyi sihk Faatgwok choi.

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1  Fûnyihng gwônglàhm  a formal and respectful way of saying “Welcome.”
2  yāt bāau daaih syūhtiú  one large French fries
3  yāt būi sai hólohk  one small cola
4 *Jáau fāan léuhng go bun.* Your change is $2.50.
5 *Yahtbún choi tùhng Jünggwok choi, ngóh dōuhaih jüngyi Jünggwok choi dō-dī.* I like Chinese food better than Japanese food.

**Adjectives of size** (2)

*Daaih* is “large” in Cantonese while *sai* is “small.” Notice here that *daaih* and *sai* are put immediately before *syùhtíu* and *hólohk* and not the containers *bāau* and *būi*.

**The verbal particle fāan** (4)

The verbal particle *fāan* in *jáau fāan léuhng go bun* indicates that the action is “in response” to a previous action. Hence the expression more explicitly means “I am giving you HK$2.50 as change in response to your payment.” Similarly, when returning a borrowed object to the owner, you say *Béi fāan néih* to indicate that it is a return action.

**Stating preferences** (5)

In Cantonese, there is no exact equivalent to the expression “I prefer A to B.” Below are sentences showing how preferences are expressed in Cantonese, using Chinese food (*Jünggwok choi*) and Japanese food (*Yahtbún choi*) as examples.

*Jünggwok choi tùhng Yahtbún choi, ngóh béigaau jüngyi Jünggwok choi.*
(lit.) Chinese food and Japanese food, I comparatively like Chinese food.

*Jünggwok choi tùhng Yahtbún choi, ngóh jüngyi jünggwok choi dō-dī.*
(lit.) Chinese food and Japanese food, I like Chinese food more.

*Ngóh jüngyi Jünggwok choi dō-gwo Yahtbún choi.*
(lit.) I like Chinese food more than Japanese food.

*Béigaau* functions like the English word “comparatively” and is put immediately before a verb or an adjective. For example, *Jük tùhng*
mihn, ngóh béigaaau héifűn sihk jük means “I prefer eating congee to eating noodles”; while Nî deui hàaih béigaaau pèhng is “This pair of shoes is comparatively cheap.”

The distinction between the usage of dō-dī and dō-gwo is very similar to that described in the discussion about comparison of prices. (See Unit 6, p. 103.) When only the preferred item is mentioned in the clause of comparison, dō-dī is used, but when both compared items are mentioned, then dō-gwo is used, and is positioned after the preferred item and before the less preferred one. In other words, dō-dī always comes in a sentence-final position while dō-gwo never does. Below are examples, which both have roughly the same meaning: “I prefer watching soccer to watching horse-racing.”

Tái jükkàuh tůhng táí páaumáh, ngóh jüngyi táí jükkàuh dō-dī.
Ngóh jüngyi táí jükkàuh dō-gwo táí páaumáh.

Exercise 2 Dream holidays

John, Carmen, and Richard are discussing their favorite places for a holiday. Read or listen to the dialogue. Afterwards, note each speaker’s favorite or preferred places for a holiday.

JOHN: Richard, néih jeui jüngyi heui bîndouh léuihhâhng a?
RICHARD: Ngóh heui-gwo hóu dō gwokgā. Ngóh jeui jüngyi Féi-leiuhbān tůhng Yandouh.
CARMEN: Gám, Féi-leiuhbān tůhng Yandouh néih jüngyi bîndouh dō-dī a?
RICHARD: Ngóh béigaau jüngyi Yandouh. Néihdeih nê? Néihdeih jeui jüngyi heui bîndouh a?

Exercise 3 The noodle shop waiter

Ah-Wing works as a waiter in a noodle shop. As a customer leaves, it is customary for him to work out the total immediately so that the customer knows how much to pay. Complete the following conversations according to the price-list. The first conversation has been completed for you as an example.
Price-list:

- won-ton noodles: HK$9.00 a bowl
- fish-ball noodles: HK$8.00 a bowl
- congee with mixed meat: HK$11.00 a bowl
- congee with beef: HK$10.00 a bowl
- vegetables with oyster sauce: HK$6.00 a plate

1 Two customers have just had two bowls of won-ton noodles and one bowl of congee with beef.

CUSTOMER: Mgöi tái-sou.
CUSTOMER: Nidouh sâ’ah mān.
AH-WING: Jáau fâan léuhng mān.
CUSTOMER: Mgöi.
AH-WING: Döjeh.

2 Three customers have just finished three bowls of fish-ball noodles, two plates of vegetables, and one bowl of congee with mixed meat.

CUSTOMER: Mgöi tái-sou.
AH-WING: (a)
CUSTOMER: Nidouh yât-baak mān.
AH-WING: (b)
CUSTOMER: Mgöi saai.
AH-WING: (c)

3 Four customers have just eaten four bowls of won-ton noodles, two bowls of fish-ball noodles, three bowls of congee with beef, and two plates of vegetables.

CUSTOMER: Mgöi tái-sou.
AH-WING: (d)
CUSTOMER: Nidouh ngh-baak mān.
AH-WING: (e)
CUSTOMER: Mgöi.
AH-WING: (f)
Exercise 4 Ordering **dímsām**

You enjoy having **dímsām** in a tea-house. Today you are taking some foreign friends to a tea-house. As you are the only one who speaks Cantonese, you have to order the tea and **dímsām**. Complete the conversation.

WAITER: Géidō wái a?
YOU: (a)
WAITER: Nǐdouh là.
YOU: (b)
WAITER: Yám mātyéh chāh a?
YOU: (c)
WAITER: Sīh kí mātyéh dímsām a?
YOU: (d)

Exercise 5 Preferences

Translate each sentence from English into Cantonese by using any of the three structures discussed. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) I prefer touring Korea to touring the Philippines.

   Ngóh jüngyi heui Hōhngwok léuihhàhng dō-gwo heui Fēileuhtbān léuihhàhng.
   
or Hōhngwok tūhng Fēileuhtbān, ngóh jüngyi heui Hōhngwok léuihhàhng dō-dī.
   
or Hōhngwok tūhng Fēileuhtbān, ngóh bēigaau jüngyi heui Hōhngwok léuihhàhng.

(b) My father likes going to the tea-house more than going to watch a movie.

c) My elder brother prefers playing basketball to playing tennis.

d) His mother likes listening to the radio more than watching television.

e) My younger sister prefers learning French to learning German.
Recognizing Chinese characters

普洱茶 Pu-erh tea
香片 jasmine tea
龍井 Lung-ching tea
點心 dímsām
蝦餃 steamed shrimp dumplings
燒賣 steamed pork dumplings
叉燒包 steamed barbecued-pork buns
粉果 steamed shrimp and bamboo-shoot dumplings
春捲 spring rolls
蛋撻 custard tarts

Communicative activities

1. Simulate a dinner at a Chinese restaurant. With a partner, take turns playing the waiter and the customer. Switch roles and repeat.
2. Plan a trip to a Cantonese restaurant in your area where waiters are Cantonese speakers. Prepare a list of things you might want to try, then order in Cantonese from the waiters.

Cultural point

The Cantonese tea-house is more than a type of restaurant. It is a kind of institution in Hong Kong and other places where Cantonese have settled. It is a lively gathering place with a culture of its own. Traditional tea-houses are often large multi-story restaurants filled with large round tables. It is common to have small, unrelated groups seated at the same table. The tables are served by carts pushed by vendors. Instead of having menus the vendors call out whatever it is that they have on their carts: shrimp dumplings, pork buns, or even fried squid. Many of these dímsām are specialties of Cantonese tea-houses.
Unit 11: Ordering food
Unit Twelve

Tīnhei

The weather

In Unit 12 you will learn about:

- understanding broadcast weather forecasts
- talking about the weather
- making predictions
- giving advice
- dates
- festive greetings
Unit 12: The weather

Dialogue 1

(CD2; 32)
Paul is telephoning his brother Peter long-distance from Hong Kong. Peter studies in New Zealand and they are talking about the weather in Hong Kong and in New Zealand. It is mid-June.

(a) What is the weather like in New Zealand?
(b) What about Hong Kong?

Paul: Peter, Náusāilāahn yihgā dī tinhei dimyéung a?

Peter: Náusāilāahn yihgā dōu géi dung a, heiwān daaihyeuk sahp douh, bātgwō hōu hōutīn. Gām, Hēunggōng nē?

Paul: Hēunggōng yihgā hōu yiht la, daaihyeuk sāam-saḥp douh. Tinhei hōu chiuhsāp, mhaih géi syūfuhk.

Dialogue 2

(CD2; 33)
Here is a radio weather forecast for Hong Kong. It is winter.

(a) What will the weather be like tomorrow?
(b) Will it rain tomorrow?
(c) What are the predicted highest and lowest temperatures?


Vocabulary

Describing the weather (CD2; 34)
The list below gives the most common words used in Cantonese for describing the weather. Try reading them aloud. If you have the audio for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.
The weather forecast

The broadcast weather forecast is usually written in fairly formal Chinese and then read aloud. As a result, some rather bookish expressions are used. These expressions are usually two-syllable versions of their more colloquial counterparts. For example, *yiht* “hot” becomes *yìhmyiht* and *nyúhn* “warm” becomes *wànnnyúhn*. The formal version of *dung* is *hòhnláahng*. Below is a list of expressions which are likely to come up in weather forecasts.

| yihmyiht | hot       | gönchou | dry       |
| hòhnláahng | cold      | tìnchihng | fine       |
| wànnnyúhn | warm      | tìnyám | overcast   |
| chìnglèuhng | cool      | mahtwàhn | cloudy    |
| chiuhsäp  | humid     | füngsai kèuhnggihng | windy |

When rain, fog, snow, or thunderstorms are predicted, the “existential” *yáuh* is used. For example:

| yáuh yúh (there will be) rain | yáuh lèuihbouh | thunderstorms |
| yáuh mèihyúh light rain | yáuh mouh | fog |
| yáuh jaauhyúh showers | yáuh syut | snow |

For forecasting rain or snow, we use verb-object constructions with the verb *lohk*, which means “to come down” or to “fall” but, unlike the English, takes an object:

| lohk-yúh | to rain       |
| lohk-syut | to snow      |

When *change* in weather is predicted, the verb *jyún*, which means “to change,” is used:

| jyún yiht | to turn hot    |
| jyún lèuhng | to turn cool   |
| jyún láahng | to turn cold   |
| jyún chihng | to turn fine   |
Weather forecasts often predict wind directions. In Cantonese, the verb *chēui* is used before the word for the direction and the word for “wind,” *fŭng*. For example, *chēui dŭng fŭng* predicts “easterly winds.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>chēui dŭng fŭng</em></th>
<th>easterly winds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>chēui nāhm fŭng</em></td>
<td>southerly winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>chēui sāi fŭng</em></td>
<td>westerly winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>chēui bāk fŭng</em></td>
<td>northerly winds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weather forecasts also predict highest temperatures, lowest temperatures, and relative humidities. Below are the related vocabulary items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>heiwān</th>
<th>air temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jeui gŏu heiwān</td>
<td>highest temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jeui dăi heiwān</td>
<td>lowest temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sēungdeui sāpdouh</td>
<td>relative humidity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Temperature and humidity**

Normally, the Celsius scale (centigrade) is used, and since this is taken for granted, only the word for “degree,” namely *douh*, is used when referring to temperatures. Hence, 10°C is *sahp douh*, while 20°C is *yih-sahp douh*. Relative humidities, on the other hand, are expressed in percentages. Note the Cantonese structure. For example, 50% is *baak fahn ji ngh-sahp*. Here, the figure 50 (*ngh-sahp*) comes after the expression for %: *baak fahn ji*; *baak* means “one hundred” and *fahn* means “parts,” and the whole expression *baak fahn ji ngh-sahp* translates literally into “one hundred parts fifty.” Hence, 60% is *baak fahn ji luhk-sahp* and 65% is *baak fahn ji luhk-sahp ngh*, etc.

**Idioms and structures** *(CD2; 39)*

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The *italicized* items are *new* items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.
1 Náusāillāahn yihgā dī tīnhei dīmyéung a? How is the weather in New Zealand right now?
2 mhaih géi syūfuḥk it doesn’t feel very comfortable
3 Yuhchāak tīngyaht wūih chēui bāk fūng. It is predicted that winds will be northerly tomorrow.

The possessive dī (1)

The dī in this context is used to indicate possession, specifying that the weather being discussed is that of the present moment in New Zealand. Notice that the “possessor” of the weather is yihgā rather than Náusāillāhn; thus the expression is very similar in structure to “the present moment’s weather in New Zealand” in English. A similar expression is Hèunggóng gāmyaht dī tīnhei, which means “today’s weather in Hong Kong.”

Asking about the weather (2)

To ask a general question about the weather, you can use the question word dīmyéung:

Tīngyaht dī tīnhei dīmyéung a? What will the weather be like tomorrow?

or you can ask a choice-type question:

Tīngyaht dī tīnhei hōu-mh-hōu a? Will the weather be good tomorrow?

You can also ask about certain characteristics of the weather with a choice-type question:

Tīngyaht yiht-mh-yiht a? Will it be cold tomorrow?
Tīngyaht hōu-mh-hōutīn a? Will it be fine tomorrow?
Tīngyaht yáuh móuh yūh lohk a? Will there be rain tomorrow?

Predicting the future (3)

When predicting things that are likely to happen in the future, we use the modal wūih. Wūih can be used before an adjective, as in:

Tíngyaht wúih hóutín. It will be fine tomorrow.

It can be used before the “existential” verb yáuh, as in:

Tíngyaht wúih yáuh mouh. It will be foggy tomorrow.

It can also be used before other verbs, as in:

Hauhyaht wúih lohk-yúh. It will rain the day after tomorrow.
Jáumuht wúih jyún lèuhng. It will turn cool during the weekend.

Exercise 1 Weather forecast

Here is a forecast of tomorrow’s weather in Guangzhou. Read the forecast or listen to the audio recording. Then complete the table.


| General description: |
| Highest temperature: |
| Lowest temperature: |
| Relative humidity:  %— % |

Vocabulary

Wishing others well (CD2; 35)

Below are a number of idiomatic expressions used in wishing others well during festive seasons or on special occasions:

| Singdaan faailohk! | Merry Christmas! |
| Sānnih faailohk! | Happy New Year! |
| Sāangyaht faailohk! | Happy birthday! |
| Yātlouh seuhnfúng! | Have a good flight! |
| Gūnghéi faatchóih! | greeting said at Chinese New Year |
The months of the year (CD2; 36)

In Cantonese, the months do not have special names, but are simply called “the first month” (yāt-yuht), “the second month” (yih-yuht) and so on. Here is a list of the twelve months in Cantonese:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yāt-yuht</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>chāt-yuht</th>
<th>July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yih-yuht</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>baat-yuht</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sāam-yuht</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>gāu-yuht</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sei-yuht</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>sahp-yuht</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngh-yuht</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>sahp-yāt-yuht</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luhk-yuht</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>sahp-yih-yuht</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Days of the month

To refer to a particular day of the month, the word houh (lit. “number”) is used. The “first” is yāt-houh, the “second” is yih-houh, the “third” is sāam-houh, etc. If the month is also given in a date, then the month comes before the day. Below are a few examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yāt-yuht yāt-houh</th>
<th>first of January</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chāt-yuht gāu-houh</td>
<td>ninth of July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sahp-yih-yuht yih-sahp-ngh-houh</td>
<td>twenty-fifth of December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dialogue 3

(CD2; 37)

It is Christmas Day and Jimmy is flying out to New York to visit his brother Oscar this evening. He is telephoning Oscar from Hong Kong, asking him about the weather in New York.

(a) What is the weather in New York like now?
(b) What is the average temperature?
(c) What is the outlook for next week?
(d) What advice does Oscar give to Jimmy about the clothes to bring to New York?

JIMMY: Singdaan faailohk!
OSCAR: Singdaan faailohk!
JIMMY: Oscar, Náuyeuk yihgā dī tinhēi dīmyéung a?
OSCAR: Náuyeuk yihgá hóu dúng a, lohk-gán syut a, heiwan daaih-yeuk lhng hah yih-sahp douh.
JIMMY: Gám, sáí-mh-sái daaih dō-dí sāam lèih Náuyeuk a?
OSCAR: Jeui hóu daaih dō-dí sāam lèih lá.
JIMMY: Hóu lá.
OSCAR: Bātgwo mhóu daaih taai dō sāam wo, yānwaih hah go láih baai tīnhei wūih nyūhn fāan dī.
OSCAR: Hóu lá. Yātlouh seuhnfūng.

Dialogue 4

(CD2; 38)
It’s a December day in Hong Kong. On the radio the weather forecaster is giving some weather information as well as advice for rivers.

(a) What will the weather be like today?
(b) What advice is given to people who are leaving home?
(c) What advice is given to drivers?


Idioms and structures (CD2; 39)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1 lhng hah yih-sahp douh 20° below zero
2 Jeui hóu daaih dō-dī sāam lèih lá. It might be best to bring more clothes.
3 Bātgwo mhóu daaih taai dō sāam wo But don’t bring too many clothes
4 nyúhn fään dī it will become warm again
5 tīngyaht gin lā see you tomorrow
6 Daaihgā chēut gāai geidākEveryone must remember to put jeuk dō gihn sāam on more clothes when going out
7 Daaihgā yiu sīusām jā-chē a. Everyone has to drive carefully.

Sub-zero temperatures (1)

Līhng means “zero” and hah means “below” or “under”; thus lihng hah yih-sahp douh is “twenty degrees below zero.” Similarly, lihng hah sahp douh is “minus ten degrees.”

Giving advice (2, 3)

When giving advice in Cantonese, the two modals jeui hóu (similar in meaning to “had better”) and yiu (similar in meaning to “should”) can be used before the verb. To advise somebody not to do something, mhóu “don’t” is used before the verb. To say that it is not necessary to do something, msái is used. Below are some examples:

Gāmyaht wūih yáuh jaauyúh. Néih chēut gāai jeui hóu daai bā jē. There will be showers today. You’d better take your umbrella when you go out.

Gāmmáahn wūih hóu dung. Néih yiu jeuk dō gihn sāam a. It will be cold tonight. You have to put on more clothes.

Gāmyaht tīnhei hóu dūng. Mhóu heui yàuhséui la. It’s very cold today. Don’t go swimming.

Tīnhei wūih jyūn yiht. Msái jeuk taai dō sāam la. The weather is getting hotter. There’s no need to wear too many clothes.

Fāan to indicate change back to normal (4)

The word fāan here has the meaning of “back to normal.” Thus the expression nyúhn fāan dī has the connotation of “going back to the warm weather which we had before.”
“See you” (5)

The verb gin means “to see.” Tingyaht gin lā is equivalent to “See you tomorrow” in English and is often used to close a conversation.

Everyone (6)

Daaihgā is a pronoun which means “everyone,” and is very often used in broadcast messages to appeal to the general public. For example, Daaihgā yiu síusām jā-chē a is an appeal to the listeners to drive carefully.

Adverbs of manner (7)

Adverbs of manner, like most other adverbs, are put before the verbs they modify. For example:

Daaihgā yiu síusām jā-chē a. We must drive carefully.
Daaihgā maahn-máan hàahng a. Please walk slowly.

Exercise 2 The weather in China

The two newspaper cuttings below provide information about two major cities in China, namely Shanghai (Seuhnghói) and Guangzhou (Gwóngjäu). You have friends who plan to go to these cities at different times of the year, and they have come to consult you for the appropriate weather information. Complete the conversation which follows by using the information provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Temperature high (°C)</th>
<th>Temperature low (°C)</th>
<th>Number of days with rainfall</th>
<th>Monthly rainfall (in cm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHEN TO GO Although Shanghai’s climate is subtropical, it does have a distinct change of seasons. Spring weather is usually warm but unsettled. Summer is hot and humid, with the highest incidence of rainy days of all the seasons. Autumn is the best season for visiting: warm and relatively dry. Winter, the longest season, is cold, but although the temperatures often go below freezing, snow is unusual.

Guangzhou temperature range and average rainfall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Temperature high (°C)</th>
<th>Temperature low (°C)</th>
<th>Number of days with rainfall</th>
<th>Monthly rainfall (in cm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHEN TO GO Guangzhou is in a subtropical weather belt. In summer it is hot and humid, the rainfall heavy, with numerous thunderstorms. No pronounced winter season exists; although occasional days can be very cold, generally winter is mild and pleasant. In spring the weather starts to get warmer and the humidity higher; the rainy season begins in April and continues through September, about 80 per cent of the yearly average of 162 cm falling in these six months. Autumn is a delightful season with warm days, low humidity, and infrequent rainfall.

The province is frequently affected by typhoons in August and September. Northerly breezes prevail in October through February; southerly winds are more evident in the other months.

The most pleasant time to visit Guangzhou is October through March.

Conversation 1:

JOHN: Ngóm yāt-yüht yiu heui Seuhnghói. Seuhnghói yāt-yüht dūng-mh-dūng a?
YOU: (a) Seuhnghói yāt-yüht dōu géi dūng a. Heiwān . . .
JOHN: Gám, sái-mh-sáih hóu dō sāam a?
YOU: (b)
JOHN: Seuhnghói yāt-yuht yáuh móuh yúh lohk a? Sái-mh-sái daai bá jē a?
YOU: (c)

Conversation 2:
CARMEN: Ngóh sei-yuht wúih heui Gwóngjäu. Gwóngjäu ei-yuht dī tinhei dím a?
YOU: (d) Gwóngjäu sei-yuht ...
CARMEN: Gám, heiwān daaihyeuk géidō douh a?
YOU: (e)
CARMEN: Gám, chiuh-mh-chiuhsāp a?
YOU: (f)

Conversation 3:
RICHARD: Ngóh sahp-yuht heui Gwóngjäu. Néih ji-mh-jī Gwóngjäu sahp-yuht dī tinhei wúih dím ga?
YOU: (g)
RICHARD: Wúih-mh-wúih lohk-yúh a?
YOU: (h)
RICHARD: Gám, sái-mh-sái daai bá jē heui a?
YOU: (i)

Exercise 3 Predicting the future

Translate the following sentences into Cantonese, using wúih for predictions. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) It will rain tomorrow.
   Tingyaht wúih lohk-yúh.
(b) The weather will become cooler the day after tomorrow.
(c) The weather will become hot next week.
(d) It will be very windy on Saturday.
(e) There will be thunderstorms on Sunday.
(f) It will be humid tomorrow.
Exercise 4 When will they come home?

Mr. and Mrs. Chan’s children all live abroad, but they are all coming home this year to celebrate their parents’ fortieth wedding anniversary. Mr. and Mrs. Chan are looking at their calendar to remind themselves when each of their children will come home to Hong Kong. Using the information provided below, complete the conversation between Mr. Chan and Mrs. Chan.

MR. CHAN: Simon géisih fāan Hēunggóng a?
MRS. CHAN: Simon baat-houh sīngkēih-yih jauh fāan Hēunggóng la.
MR. CHAN: Gám, Samuel nē?
MRS. CHAN: Samuel àh? (a) Samuel ...
MR. CHAN: Gám, Keith nē?
MRS. CHAN: (b)
MR. CHAN: Teresa yauh géisih fāan lèih a?
MRS. CHAN: (c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recognizing Chinese characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>炎熱</th>
<th>hot</th>
<th>晴朗</th>
<th>fine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>寒冷</td>
<td>cold</td>
<td>陰陰</td>
<td>overcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>溫暖</td>
<td>warm</td>
<td>密雲</td>
<td>cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>清涼</td>
<td>cool</td>
<td>有雨</td>
<td>rainy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicative activities

1. Talk about the weather in your hometown. What is it like during the winter? What is it like during the summer?
2. Pair up with a Cantonese-speaking classmate or colleague. Try to find out about where the person grew up and what the climate is like there.

Cultural point

Hong Kong is in a tropical storm belt where tropical cyclones (or typhoons) are common. Tropical cyclones typically occur between the months of May and November, and are particularly common in September. Advisory warnings are issued by the Hong Kong observatory whenever a tropical cyclone centered within 800 km of Hong Kong poses a threat to the territory. Advisory bulletins include the tropical cyclone warning signal issued and its significance, the latest position and expected movement of the center of the tropical cyclone, information on the wind strength, rainfall, and sea level in the territory and advice on precautionary measures. The signals are not on an even scale, but are according to the following sequence 1, 3, 8, 9, 10. Below are the official signal levels for Hong Kong:

![Signal 1]

This is a standby signal, indicating that a tropical cyclone is centered within about 800 km of Hong Kong and may affect the territory.

![Signal 3]

Strong wind is expected or blowing generally in Hong Kong near sea level, with a sustained speed of 41–62 km/h and gusts which may exceed 110 km/h, and the wind condition is expected to persist. Winds are normally expected to become generally stronger in Hong Kong within 12 hours after the issue of this signal. Winds over offshore waters and on high ground may reach gale force.
Gale or storm force wind is expected or blowing generally in Hong Kong near sea level, with a sustained wind speed of 63–117 km/h from the quarter indicated and gusts which may exceed 180 km/h.

Gale or storm force wind is increasing or expected to increase significantly in strength.

Hurricane force wind is expected or blowing with sustained wind speed reaching upwards from 118 km/h and gusts that may exceed 220 km/h.
Unit Thirteen
Yīfuḥk
The clothes we wear

In Unit 13 you will learn about:

- describing what people are wearing
- colors
**Dialogue 1**

*(CD2; 40)*

CHAN Syut Wai and Emily have been shopping together. They have met John in a café, and they are showing him what they bought.

(a) What did Emily buy?

(b) What did CHAN Syut Wai buy?

(c) What did CHAN Syut Wai buy for John?

JOHN: Wål! Néihdeih máaih-jó gam dō yéh âh?


JOHN: Gám néih nē, CHAN Syut Wai? Néih máaih-jó dī mátyēh a?

CHAN SYUT WAI: Ngóh máaih jó yāt tou toujōng, yāt gihn ngoihtou, túhng léuhng gihn sēutsāam. Néih táí leng-mh-leng?

JOHN: Haih géi leng wo.


JOHN: Mātyēh lēih ga?

CHAN SYUT WAI: Ngóh máaih-jó nī tiuh tāai bēi néih. Néih jūng-mh-jūngyi a?

JOHN: Jūngyi. Dōjeh.

**Dialogue 2**

*(CD2; 41)*

John and Carmen are looking at a photograph of John’s colleagues, which was taken on a trip to Beijing. John is telling Carmen who’s who in his office.

(a) Who is the man wearing a coat and a hat?

(b) Who is the man wearing a scarf?

(c) Who is the woman wearing a skirt and high-heeled shoes?

CARMEN: Yí, nī go jeuk daaihlāu, daai móu ge haih bīngō a?

JOHN: Nī go daai-jó móu ge haih Ben, ngóhdeih go lóuhbāan.
CARMEN: Kéuih jauh haih Ben àh? Gám, nǐ go laahm-jó géng gän ge, fèih-féi-déi ge yauh haih bǐngo a?

JOHN: Laahm-jó génggān nǐ go haih Teddy. Teddy gaaklèih, jeuk kwàhn tūhng gōujāanghàaih gó go haih kéuih taai-táai.

CARMEN: Nǐ go jauh haih Teddy go taai-táai àh?

JOHN: Haih a, jeuk kwàhn tūhng gōujāanghàaih, chèuhng tàuhfaat nǐ go jauh haih Teddy go taai-táai laak.

**Vocabulary**

**Clothing**

Below is a list of clothing. Notice the different classifiers that are used. Try reading each item aloud. If you have the audio for this book, model your pronunciation on the recording.

**Men’s wear (CD2; 42)**

- yāt gihn sēutsāam a shirt
- yāt tou sāijōng a suit
- yāt tiuh (sāijōng) fu a pair of trousers/slacks
- yāt tiuh tāai a tie
- yāt gihn ngoihtou a jacket
- yāt deui (pèih)hàaih a pair of (leather) shoes
- yāt deui maht a pair of socks
- yāt déng móu a hat/a cap

**Ladies’ wear (CD2; 43)**

- yāt gihn sēutsāam a blouse
- yāt tiuh kwāhn a dress, a skirt
- yāt tiuh bunjihtkwāhn a skirt
- yāt tiuh (sāijōng) fu a pair of slacks
- yāt tou toujōng a suit
- yāt gihn ngoihtou a jacket
- yāt deui sīmaht a pair of pantyhose
- yāt deui (pèih)hàaih a pair of (leather) shoes
- yāt deui gōujāanghàaih a pair of high-heeled shoes
## Casual wear *(CD2; 44)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yāt gihn tisēut</td>
<td>a T-shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt tiuh ngâuhjáifu</td>
<td>a pair of jeans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt tiuh dyúnfu</td>
<td>a pair of shorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt deui bôhàaih</td>
<td>a pair of sports shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt deui làuhnghàaih</td>
<td>a pair of sandals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Warm clothes *(CD2; 45)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yāt gihn làangsâaam</td>
<td>a woollen sweater/jumper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt gihn (daaih)läu</td>
<td>a(n) (over)coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt tiuh génggân</td>
<td>a scarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāt deui sáumaht</td>
<td>a pair of gloves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Classifiers for items of clothing

*Gihn* is the classifier used for tops such as *sēutsāaam* “shirt” and *ngoïhtou* “jacket,” *tiuh* is the classifier used for *fu* “slacks” and *kwàhn* “dress and skirt,” while *deui* is the classifier for all things that come in pairs, such as kinds of *hàaih, maht,* and *sáumaht* “shoes, socks, and gloves.”

## Exercise 1 The spending spree

The Chans are going to Canada. Mrs. Chan has just gone shopping for warm clothes, and Mr. Chan is finding out what she has bought for the family. Read the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Chan. Then note down what Mrs. Chan has bought.

**MRS. CHAN:** Néih tái. Ngóh máaih-jó géi dō sāaam.

**MR. CHAN:** Haih wo. Néih máaih-jó dī mātyéh a?


**MR. CHAN:** Haih wo. Dī génggân hóu leng wo.

**MRS. CHAN:** Haih a. Dī génggân hóu leng ga. Bâtgwo dōu msyun hóu gwai.

**MR. CHAN:** Gám, nī bāau haih mātyéh lêih ga?

**MRS. CHAN:** Nī bāau haih sáumaht. Ngóh júngguhng máaih-jó ngh deui sáumaht.

**MR. CHAN:** Wā! Gam dō āh?
Idioms and structures (CD2; 48)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. Wā
   - an exclamation showing surprise

2. Néihdeih máaih-jó gam dō yéh àh?
   - You bought so many things?

3. Néih tái.
   - Look.

4. Néih tái leng-mh-leng?
   - Do you think they are pretty?

5. Haih gēi leng wo.
   - They are quite pretty.

   - I bought something for you.

7. Mátyéh lēih ga?
   - What is it? (showing curiosity)

8. Ní go jeuk daaihláu, daai móu ge haih bīng a?
   - Who is this one wearing a coat and a hat?

9. lóuhbáan
   - boss

Question to indicate recognition and slight surprise (2)

Here Néihdeih máaih-jó gam dō yéh àh? is another question which shows recognition and slight surprise. The word gam helps indicate the recognition. A genuine question (for instance, if John is asking Carmen on the phone) would be Néihdeih máaih-jó hóu dō yéh àh? To both questions a positive response is Haih a while a negative one would be Mhaih aak “No, not really.”

Haih ... wo (5)

To comment on something being quite pretty, you can say Gēi leng wo. However, when you are asked to judge whether something is pretty and a positive answer is expected, you can make the emphatic statement Haih gēi leng wo. The haih used before the adjective leng coupled with the particle wo (see Unit 5) help convey the message “They are quite pretty.”
The verbs for “putting on” (8)

Jeuk is the Cantonese verb which means “to wear” or “to put on.” However, there are a few other verbs which are used specifically for certain kinds of clothes. For example, for tāai “tie,” the verb dá is used, while daai is used for móu “hat/cap.” For génggān “scarf,” the verb laahm, which literally means “to wrap around the body,” is used.

To say what clothes somebody has put on, the aspect marker -jó is often used, as follows:

Mary jeuk-jó tou toujōng túhng gōujaanghāaih.
Mary is wearing a suit and high-heeled shoes.

Tīnhei hōu dung. Jimmy laahm-jó tiuh génggān.
The weather is cold. Jimmy has put on a scarf.

When information about clothes is used to describe people for identification purposes, the aspect marker -jó is not used, and the classifiers are omitted. For example:

Jeuk sāijōng gó go haih ngṓh bàh-bā.
The one wearing a suit is my father.

Daai móu gó go haih Peter.
The one wearing a cap is Peter.

Jeuk tīsēut, ngàoujīāifu gó go néuihjái hōu leng.
The girl wearing a T-shirt and jeans is very pretty.

Vocabulary

Colors (CD2; 46)

| hùhngsīk | red       | hàaksīk | black       |
| wòhngsīk | yellow    | jìsīk   | violet, purple |
| lāahmsīk | blue      | fēsīk   | brown       |
| luhksīk  | green     | chāangsīk | orange     |
| baahksīk | white     | fūisīk  | gray        |

Sīk by itself means “color.” Thus hùhngsīk, for example, literally means “red color.”
Dialogue 3

(CD2; 47)
Sam and Elza are discussing the clothes they wear to work. Sam teaches at a university while Elza works in a bank.

(a) What does Sam wear to work?
(b) Does he usually wear a tie?
(c) What does Elza wear to work?
(d) What does Elza wear when she does not have to go to work?

ELZA: Sam, néih pìhngsìh jeuk màtyéh sàam fāan-gúng ga?
ELZA: Sái-mh-sái dá tāai a?

Idioms and structures (CD2; 48)

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogue above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1 Ngóh hái daaihhohk gaau-syú I teach at a university
2 msái jeuk dák taai sìmàhn (l) do not have to be very smartly dressed
3 Msái yàtdihng dá tāai I don’t necessarily have to wear a tie.
4 ngóh dûngtìn tìnheí dûng jauh dòsou dá tāai In winter when the weather is cold I usually wear a tie.
5 hahtìn (in) summer
6 Ngóh fāan ngânhhông I work in a bank
7 ngóh … jauh jeuk fāan (lit.) I will go back to wearing T-shirts tîsēut …

“University”

Daaihhohk is “university,” and it literally means “big school.” Sîuhohk (lit. “little school”), on the other hand, is “primary school,” and jînghohk (lit. “middle school”) is “secondary school.”

Gaau-syū


Dress code

To comment on how somebody is dressed, the resultative particle dâk is used after the verb jeuk, which is then followed by an adjective. Resultative structure is used to indicate the result or extent of the action of the verb. Below are some examples:

Kéuih jeuk dâk hóu sîmâhn. He is very smartly dressed.
Kéuih jeuk dâk hóu chèuihbín.
Dî hohksâang jeuk dâk hóu jîngchâih. The students are very neatly dressed.

To say whether one needs to dress up for an occasion, the modals yiu “have to,” msái “don’t have to,” and hóyíh “can” are used. For example:

Chàhn sînsâang fāan-gûng yiu jeuk dâk hóu sîmâhn. Mr. Chan has to dress up smartly when he goes to work.

Richard fāan-gûng msái jeuk dâk taai sîmâhn. Richard does not have to dress up too smartly when he goes to work.

Ngóh sîngkèih-luhk fāan-gûng hóyíh jeuk ngâuhjâîfu tûhng bôhâaih.
On Saturdays I can go to work in jeans and sports shoes.
The idiomatic use of the verb fāan to mean “to work in” (6)

The expression Ngóh fāan ngànhhòhng is another way of saying Ngóh hái ngànhhòhng fāan-gūng “I work in a bank”; fāan is the verb taken from fāan-gūng.

The particle fāan to mean “back to” (7)

Fāan in the expression ngóh jauh jeuk fāan tīsēut … has the meaning of “going back to,” and conveys the idea that Elza usually wears T-shirts and other casual clothes.

Exercise 2 Grace’s friends

Grace is showing a photograph of her friends in Japan to John and Carmen. Read the conversation, then label the picture with the correct names.

GRACE: Nǐ gěi go dōu haih ngóh hái Yahtbún dī hòu pàhng-yáuh.
JOHN: Nǐ go jeuk dāk hóu sīmāhn ge haih bīngo a?
Exercise 3 Old friends

Your friends have come to your home for dinner. After dinner you show them your photos. You are looking at a photo of your college friends taken ten years ago on the snowy mountains. You are telling your dinner guests the names of each of them by describing their appearance and the clothes they were wearing. Complete the monologue by referring to the picture.

YOU: Jób în nî go jeuk fu, laahm-jó génggān, daai-jó sáumaht ge néuähjái ...
Exercise 4 What you wear to work

You are talking with a friend about the clothes that you have to wear to work and the clothes that you like wearing when going out in the evening and on the weekends. Complete the conversation below with true information about yourself.

YOUR FRIEND: Ngóh múih yaht fāan-güng yiu jeuk sāijōng dá tāai. Néih nē? Néih sái-mh-sái a?
YOU: Ngóh ...
YOU: Ngóh ...

Recognizing Chinese characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>紅色</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>黃色</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>藍色</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>綠色</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>白色</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>黑色</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communicative activities

1. Describe what your partner is wearing. Make sure you include the colors of their clothing and whether they are casually or smartly dressed.
2. Have a Cantonese-speaking friend describe over the phone what he or she is wearing that day. If you are artistically inclined, do a sketch of what you hear and check later for accuracy.
Cultural point

Clothing in Hong Kong

With its small size (1,054 km²/407 sq. miles) and relative lack of natural resources, Hong Kong’s economy has always relied on exports. A big part of that export market is textiles. One can find the entire spectrum of clothing for sale in Hong Kong from chic brands to HK$10 shirts hawked by street vendors. Moreover, tailors stand ready to make any kind of custom clothing you desire. Many of the tailors (as in many places in southeast Asia) are from the local Indian community.
In Unit 14 you will learn about:

- discussing past experiences
- asking “how often,” “how long,” and “when”
- describing countries and cities
Dialogue 1

(CD2; 49)
Richard and John are discussing their traveling experiences.

(a) How many times has John been to China?
(b) When did he go to China?
(c) Has Richard been to China?
(d) When did Richard go to Taiwan?

RICHARD: John, néih yáuh móuh heui-gwo Jünggwok a?
JOHN: Yáuh a, ngóh heui-gwo Jünggwok la.
RICHARD: Gám, néih heui-gwo géidó chi Jünggwok a?
JOHN: Ngóh heui-gwo léuhng chi.
RICHARD: Néih géisìh heui ga?
RICHARD: Ngóh meih heui-gwo Jünggwok, bātgwo ngóh heui-gwo Tōihwāan.
JOHN: Néih géisìh heui Tōihwāan ga?
RICHARD: Ngóh seuhng go yuht heui Tōihwāan ge.

Dialogue 2

(CD2; 50)
HO Syut Hwa and CHAN Syut Wai are talking about the sports they have played lately.

(a) Has CHAN Syut Wai played any tennis this year?
(b) Why hasn’t CHAN Syut Wai done any swimming this year?
(c) Why hasn’t HO Syut Hwa played any sports this year?

HO SYUT HWA: CHAN Syut Wai, néih gāmnín yáuh móuh yàuh-gwo séui a?
HO SYUT HWA: Móuh a. Ngóh gāmnín hóu mōhng, móuh sīhgaan jouh wahnduhng, sóyíh móuh yáuh-gwo séui, yauh móuh dá-gwo mōhngkāuh.
Vocabulary

(CD2; 51)
Below are some commonly used expressions about past time. Try reading each item aloud. If you have the audio material for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gämnin</td>
<td>this year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gauhnín</td>
<td>last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chihnnín</td>
<td>the year before last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ní go yuht</td>
<td>this month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sehng go yuht</td>
<td>last month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chihn go yuht</td>
<td>the month before last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ní go láihbaai</td>
<td>this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sehng go láihbaai</td>
<td>last week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chihn go láihbaai</td>
<td>the week before last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sääam nihn chihn</td>
<td>three years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sääam go yuht chihn</td>
<td>three months ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sääam go láihbaai chihn</td>
<td>three weeks ago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that in the last three expressions, chihn means “ago.” However, both yuht and láihbaai take the classifier go, while nihn does not. Nihn is the same word as nin in gămnin, gauhnín, and chihnnín, but the pronunciation has undergone a tone change.

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. **néih yáuh móuh heui-gwo Jünggwok a?** Have you ever been to China?
2. **néih heui-gwo géidö chi Jünggwok a?** How many times have you been to China?
3. **Néih géisih heui ga?** When did you go?
4. **Néih gămnin yáuh móuh jouh-gwo wahnduhng a?** Have you done any sports this year?
5 Ngóh gāmnín hóu mòhng  I have been very busy this year.
6 móuh sihgaan jouh-wahnduhng  (I haven’t had) time to do sports

Asking about and describing experiences  (1)

To ask whether somebody has had the experience of doing something, you can form a choice-type question with the two existential verbs yáuh and móuh, and use the aspect marker -gwo after the main verb:

Néih yáuh móuh heui-gwo  Have you been to Australia?
    Oujáu a?

Néih yáuh móuh gin-gwo  Have you seen kangaroos before?
    doihsyú a?

A positive answer to the first question would then be:

Yáuh a, ngóh heui-gwo Oujáu.  Yes, I have been to Australia.

And a negative answer would be:

Móuh a, ngóh móuh heui-gwo Oujáu.  No, I have not been to Australia.

A second way to ask the same first question is to offer the two choices of heui-gwo and meih heui-gwo, meih being the adverb for incomplete action. However, in such an interrogative pattern the verb heui and the aspect marker -gwo are not repeated in the negative option, resulting in the following question:

Néih heui-gwo Oujáu meih a?  Have you been to Australia?

And to ask the second question in the same way, you say:

Néih gin-gwo doihsyú meih a?  Have you seen kangaroos before?

Positive answers to the questions above can be either long or short, as follows:

Ngóh heui-gwo Oujáu. / Heui-gwo.
Ngóh gin-gwo doihsyú. / Gin-gwo.
Negative answers can also be long or short:

- Ngóh meih heui-gwo Oujāu. / Meih heui-gwo.
- Ngóh meih gin-gwo doihsyú. / Meih gin-gwo.

**Asking about frequency** (2)

A possible follow-up question to whether somebody has experienced something is to ask how many times. The Cantonese expression for asking this is géidō chi. Read the following exchange:

A: Néih yáuh móuh heui-gwo Oujāu a?
   Have you been to Australia?
B: Yáuh a, ngóh heui-gwo Oujāu.
   Yes, I have been to Australia.
A: Néih heui-gwo géidō chi Oujāu a?
   How many times have you been to Australia?
B: Ngóh heui-gwo léuhng chi Oujāu.
   I’ve been to Australia twice.

The point to bear in mind about the pattern is the word order. The expression of frequency comes between the verb-and-aspect marker heui-gwo and its object Oujāu, so that the literal translation of the Cantonese Ngóh heui-gwo léuhng chi Oujāu is “I have been two times (to) Australia.” Here is a further exchange to illustrate the structure:

A: Néih gāmnín yàuh-gwo séui meih a?
   Have you done any swimming this year?
B: Yàuh-gwo.
   Yes, I have.
A: Néih gāmnín yàuh-gwo géidō chi séui a?
   How many times have you been swimming this year?
B: Ngóh gāmnín yàuh-gwo sāam chi séui.
   I’ve been swimming three times this year.

**Asking when** (3)

When discussing experiences, another possible follow-up question is “When …?” The Cantonese word for “when” is géisih. Read the following exchanges:
A: **Néih yáuh móuh heui-gwo Oujāu a?**
Have you been to Australia?

B: **Yáuh a, ngóh heui-gwo Oujāu.**
Yes, I have been to Australia.

A: **Néih géisih heui ga?**
So, when did you go?

B: **Ngóh gauhnín heui ge.**
I went last year.

C: **Néih yáuh móuh gin-gwo sāyūh a?**
Have you ever seen sharks before?

D: **Yáuh a, ngóh gin-gwo sāyūh la.**
Yes, I have seen sharks before.

C: **Néih géisih gin ga?**
When did you see them?

D: **Ngóh sāam nihn chihn hái Oujāu gin ge.**
I saw them in Australia three years ago.

Notice that in the follow-up question to “When …?” the destination or the object can be omitted, and so can the aspect marker -gwo. Ga is often used instead of a as the interrogative (question) particle in such a follow-up question. In answer to a follow-up question, ge is often used as a sentence-final particle. In Cantonese, time expressions always come before the verb, hence **Ngóh gauhnín heui ge.**

---

**Vocabulary**

**Major cities of the world** *(CD2; 52)*

Here is a list of some of the world’s major cities. Read each item aloud, or if you have the audio material for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lèuhndēun</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>Sāamfāahnsīh</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lohkkchaamgēi</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Dungging</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māhnèihláai</td>
<td>Manila</td>
<td>Dölēuhndō</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Náuyeuk</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Wāngōwâh</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bālāih</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Describing countries (CD2; 53)

You may want to say what you like about a particular country. Below are some of the probable reasons for liking a country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Füngging hóu leng.</th>
<th>The scenery is good.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wàahnghíng hóu gónjehng.</td>
<td>The environment is clean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gāautüng hóu fōngbihn.</td>
<td>The transportation is convenient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dī yāhn hóu hóu.</td>
<td>The people are nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Máaih-yéh hóu pèhng.</td>
<td>Things are very cheap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dī yēh hóu hōusihk.</td>
<td>The food is delicious.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dialogue 3

(CD2; 54)

Peter is asking John about his recent trip to the United States.

(a) When did John go to the United States?
(b) Which cities did he visit?
(c) How long did he stay in each?

PETER: John, néih seuhng go yuht haih-mh-haih heui-gwo Méihgwok a?
PETER: Néih heui-jó Méihgwok bǐndouh a?
PETER: Néih heui-jó Sāamfāahnshih géinoih a?
JOHN: Ngóh heui-jó Sāamfāahnshih nγh yahnt.
PETER: Gám, Lohkchaamgēi nē? Néih hái Lohkchaamgēi làuh-jó géidō yahnt a?
JOHN: Ngóh hái Lohkchaamgēi jauh làuh-jó luhk yahnt.

Dialogue 4

(CD2; 55)

Jimmy is asking William about his impressions of Japan, which he visited once.
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(a) How does William find Japan?
(b) What are the things he likes about Japan?
(c) What are the things he doesn’t like about Japan?

JIMMY: William, néih gak, heui-gwo Yahtbún haih-mh-haih a?
WILLIAM: Haih a.
JIMMY: Néih géisîh heui ga?
WILLIAM: Ngóh chihnên heui ge.
JIMMY: Gám, néih jîng-mh-jûngyi Yahtbún a?
WILLIAM: Ngóh hóu jûngyi Yahtbún a. Yahtbún dî füngging hóu leng, jâuwaîh dôu hóu gönjehng, dî yâhn hóu hóu, hóu yáuh láihmaauh, båtgwo màái-yéh hóu gwai.
JIMMY: Dî yéh hóu-mh-hóusihk ga?
WILLIAM: Màh-má-déi lâ, tühngmâái shihk-yéh dôu hóu gwai.

Exercise 1 Your favorite place

Of all the places you have visited, which is your favorite country or city? Using Dialogue 4 as a model, explain why you like this place best.

YOU: Ngóh jeui jîngyi ... yânwaih ...

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1 néih seuhng go yuht haih-mh-haih heui-gwo Méihgwok a?
   You went to the United States last month, didn’t you?

2 Ngóh ngăam-ngăam hái Méihgwok fāan lèih.
   I have just come back from the United States.

3 Ngóh heui taam-pǎhngyáuh.
   I went to visit friends.

4 Néih heui-jó Sāamfâhnsîh géinoih a?
   How long did you stay in San Francisco?

5 Néih hái Lohkchaamgēi lâuh-jó géidô yaht a?
   How many days did you stay in Los Angeles?
6 jauwái dōu hóu gŏnje hng  It’s very clean everywhere.
7 hóu yáu liáihmaamu  very polite

**Asking for confirmation**  (1)

The question asks for confirmation of some information, hence haih-mh-haïh heui-gwo Méihgwok a? rather than yáu móuh heui-gwo Méihgwok a? or heui-gwo Méihgwok meih a? The most appropriate translation into English is the tag question: “You went to the United States last month, didn’t you?”

**Taam**  (3)

The verb taam can only take human objects and means “to pay somebody a visit.” Thus, heui Méihgwok taam-pàngnyáu is correct but *taam Méihgwok* is wrong.

**Asking about the length of an activity**  (4, 5)

Apart from asking when somebody has visited a country, one might also enquire how long he or she stayed there. For this the question word géinoi “how long” is used. Read the exchange below:

A: Néih yáu móuh heui-gwo Yahtbún a?
    Have you ever been to Japan?

    Yes, I have, once. I went last year.

A: Gám, néih heui-jó géinoi a?
    How long did you stay there?

B: Ngóh heui-jó sahp yaht.
    I was there for ten days.

Notice that two different aspect markers, namely -gwo and -jó, are used with the verb heui in this dialogue. -gwo is used to refer to an experience, as evident in the question Néih yáu móuh heui-gwo Yahtbún a? “Have you ever been to Japan?” and the statement Heui-gwo yát chi “I have been once.” -jó, on the other hand, focuses on new information about a completed action which is already known about. In the dialogue above, after A has heard that B has been to Japan once, A then asks néih heui-jó géinoi a? “How long did you
stay there?,” and B answers Ngóh heui-jó sah yah. “I was there for ten days,” both of which show recognition of the fact, now known, that B has been to Japan.

Another point worth noting is the word order. Whereas time expressions in Cantonese usually precede the verb, phrases of duration usually follow the verb, hence Ngóh heui-jó sah yah.

Exercise 2 Where have they been?

Translate the following sentences into Cantonese, using -gwo to refer to experiences. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) I went to England last year.

Ngóh gauhnín heui-gwo Yinggwok.

(b) I went to Japan the month before last.

(c) He went to France last week.

(d) She went to China two months ago.

(e) We went to Taiwan five years ago.

(f) They went to Canada four weeks ago.

Jauwàih

The Cantonese word jauwàih is a noun which means “the surroundings,” and so the sentence jauwàih dòu hòu gônjehng is literally “The surroundings are all very clean.”

Yáuh láihmaauh

In the expression yáuh láihmaauh, yáuh is a verb which means “to have” while láihmaauh is a noun which means “good manners,” hence “polite.” The expression for “impolite” is móuh láihmaauh.
Exercise 3 Globe-trotters

Winnie, Kitty, and Sally are bragging about their wide traveling experiences. Read the conversation. Then make a record of the girls' traveling experiences and decide which of the three has traveled the most.


KITTY: Gám, néih yáuh móuh heui-gwo Jūnggwok tūhng Tōihwāan a?

WINNIE: Móuh wo.


Exercise 4 Expressing frequency

To familiarize yourself with the structures for expressing frequency of past experiences, answer the following questions with the number given. The first one has been done for you as an example.

(a) Néih heui-gwo gēidō chi Yahtbūn a? (3)
Ngóh heui-gwo sāam chi Yahtbūn.

(b) Néih heui-gwo gēidō chi Dākgwok a? (5)

(c) Néih nū go yuht táí-gwo gēidō chi hei a? (2)

(d) Néih nū go láihbaai dá-gwo gēidō chi mōhngkàuh a? (2)

(e) Néih gāmnīn heui-gwo gēidō chi lēuihhāhng a? (4)

Exercise 5 Where have the Chans been?

Mr. and Mrs. Chan love traveling. They have done quite a bit this year, and their neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Wong are asking them about their travels. Complete the conversation with the information given on the calendar.
MR. WONG: Chàhn sînsâang, Chàhn táai, néihdeih gämnin yáuh móuh heui-gwo léuihhàhng a?
MR. WONG: Bîn sääm go gwokgâ a?
MRS. CHAN: (a) Ngóhdeih heui-jó …
MRS. WONG: Néihdeih géisih heui … ga?
MR. CHAN: (b) Ngóhdeih …
MR. WONG: Néihdeih heui-jó géinoih a?
MRS. CHAN: (c)
MRS. WONG: Gám, juhng yáuh nê?
MRS. CHAN: (d)
MRS. WONG: Gám, juhng yáuh yât go gwokgâ nê?
MRS. CHAN: (e)

Exercise 6 Where have you been?
Using Exercise 1 above as a model, write out your traveling experiences in Cantonese below.
YOU: Ngóh heui-gwo …

Recognizing Chinese characters

| 倫敦 | London |
| --- |
| 馬尼拉 | Manila |
| 紐約 | New York |
| 巴黎 | Paris |
Communicative activities

1. With a Cantonese-speaking partner, talk about a favorite vacation that you have experienced. Where did you go? What kind of places did you visit while there? What was your favorite thing to do? Engage your partner with the same questions.

2. Play the role of a traveler planning a round-the-world trip. Have a partner play the role of travel agent. Switch roles and repeat.

**Cultural point**

**Tourism in Hong Kong**

According to the Hong Kong tourism commission, Hong Kong received nearly 30 million visitors in 2008. Tourism-related expenditures of the same year were estimated at HK$159.0 billion. People come to Hong Kong for many reasons, but shopping and eating are among the most popular pastimes. In fact, many tourists do nothing else but shop and eat. Because of its history as a British colony, Hong Kong has a unique blend of East and West. Hong Kong has an amazing array of shopping opportunities ranging from second-hand goods street markets to glitzy malls to boutiques with world-class fashion. It is also a place to buy Chinese traditional goods and cutting-edge electronics.

Besides shopping and dining, visitors come to enjoy some of the most spectacular views found anywhere in the world, including the harbor, the Giant Buddha of Lantau Island, and scenic beaches.
In Unit 15 you will learn about:

- telephone conversations
- how to invite somebody out
- how to arrange to meet somebody
Dialogue 1

(CD2; 57)
CHAN Wing Sang is out of the office for a while and his colleague Jimmy is answering the phone for him.

(a) Who is calling?
(b) What message does he leave?
(c) What is his phone number?

MR. WONG: Wái, mgôi néih giu CHAN Wing Sang têng-dihnwá.
JIMMY: Deui mjyuh, CHAN Wing Sang hâahnghôi-jô. Chîng mahn bînwái wân kêuîh a?
MR. WONG: Ngóh haih Wôhng sînsâang a. Néih haih bînwái a?
JIMMY: Ngóh haih CHAN Wing Sang go tühngsih Jimmy. Wôhng sînsâang, sáî-mh-sáî lâuh go háuseun a?
JIMMY: Bâai-baai.
MR. WONG: Bâai-baai.

Dialogue 2

(CD2; 58)
John is alone at home. The telephone rings and John picks it up.

(a) Where is Carmen?
(b) What message does Susan leave?
(c) Does she want Carmen to call her back?

JOHN: Wái.
SUSAN: Wái, chîng mahn Carmen hái-mh-hái douh a?
JOHN: Deui mjyuh, Carmen chêu-jô gâai wo. Néih bînwái wân kêuîh a?
SUSAN: Ngóh haih Susan a. Néih haih-mh-haih John a?
JOHN: Haih a.
SUSAN: John, néîh hó-mh-hóyîh tühng ngóh lâuh go hâu-seun bêî Carmen a?
SUSAN: Mgòi néih wah béi Carmen tēng, tīngyaht lohk-yūh jauh mheui dá móhngkàuh laak.
SUSAN: Msái la.
SUSAN: Bāai-baai.

Vocabulary

(CD2; 59)
Cantonese speakers have certain conventions when talking on the telephone. Below is a list of the common expressions used. Try reading each item aloud. If you have the audio for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.

dá-dihnwá to make a phone call
tēng-dihnwá to answer the phone
dáng (yāt) dáng/dáng (yāt) jahn to wait a minute
mhái douh not here
hàahnghōi-jō has/have gone out
lāuh (yāt go) háuseun leave a message
da gwo (dihnwá) lēih to call again
da fāan (dihnwá) béi néih to call you back
daap cho sin wrong number
góng-gán line engaged
noihsin extension

Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The italicized items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1 Wái, mgōi néih giu CHAN Wing Sang tēng-dihnwá. Hello, can I speak to CHAN Wing Sang, please?
2 Deui mjyuh, CHAN Wing Sang hàahnghōi-jō. Sorry, CHAN Wing Sang is not in at the moment.
Greeting on the phone

To open a telephone conversation, Cantonese speakers say wái, whether calling or answering.

Asking for somebody on the phone

To ask for somebody on the phone, you can go straight into it by saying:

Wái, mgōi néih giu … tēng-dihnwa.  Hello, can I speak to … please?

Or you can first ask whether somebody is there:

Wái, ching mahn … hái-mh-hái douh a?  Hello, is … there, please?

Answering the phone

When a caller asks to speak to somebody else, you might answer:

Hóu, mgōi dāng yāt jahn.  Please wait a minute.

When a caller asks whether somebody else is in, you might say:


If someone asks to speak to you, you say:

Ngōh haih.  Speaking.

If somebody asked for is not in, you might say:

Deui mjyuh, kéuih mhái douh wo.  I’m sorry, he’s not in.

or

Deui mjyuh, kéuih hàahnghoi-jó wo.  I’m sorry, he’s gone out.
You may wish to ask who is calling, by saying:

**Chíng mahn bīnwái wán** May I ask who’s calling, please?
**kéuih a?**

You may also want to ask whether the caller needs to leave a message:

**Néih sái-mh-sái làuh go háuseun a?** Would you like to leave a message?

### Colleagues and classmates

(3)

The noun **tūhngsih** “colleague” is made up of **tūhng**, which means “together with,” and **sih**, which means “to work.” Thus **tūhngsih** is “someone you work with,” while **tūhnghohk** “classmate” is “someone you learn with,” **hohk** meaning “to learn.”

### Leaving a message

(4)

To ask to leave a message, you can say:

**Mgōi néih tūhng ngóh làuh go háuseun ā.**
Could you leave a message for me, please?

In leaving a message, you can say who you are, and then say you’ll call back another time:

**Mgōi néih wah bèi kéuih tēng Chàhn sīnsāang wán-gwo kéuih. Ngóh wūih sei dīm jūng dā gwo làih.**
Please tell him/her that Mr. Chan called, and I’ll call again at 4 o’clock.

You can also ask to have the person return your call:

**Ngóh haih Chàhn sīnsāang. Mgōi néih giu kéuih dā fāan dihn-wá bèi ngóh ā.**
This is Mr. Chan. Please tell him/her to call me back.

You may also leave your own telephone number for someone to call back. “Telephone number” is **dīhwá houhmáh** in Cantonese (though many people just say **dīhwá** in colloquial speech), and the actual number is cited digit by digit:
My phone number is 5709804.

**Saying goodbye**

The conventional way of saying goodbye at a meeting or on the telephone is **joi gin**, which literally means “see you again.” However, in Hong Kong, because of the Western influence, people tend to say **bāai-baai** instead. **Bāai-baai** is borrowed from the colloquial English “bye-bye,” but when we say it in Cantonese we have to abide by the rules of Cantonese, and get the tones right!

**Exercise 1 Taking messages**

Your colleague, Pam, has gone out for a while and says she’s coming back at about four o’clock. You have promised to take messages for her. Complete the following conversation between you and a caller.

**CALLER:** Wái, mgōi néih giu Pam tēng-dihnwá.
**YOU:** (a) Deui mjyuh, Pam …
**CALLER:** Chíng mahn kéuih géi dím jūng fāan lēih a?
**YOU:** (b) Pam wah kéuih …
**CALLER:** Mgōi hō-mh-hóyih tūhng ngōh làuh go háuseun a?
**YOU:** (c)
**CALLER:** Mgōi néih giu kéuih hái ngh dím jūng chīhn dá fāan dihnwá bēi ngōh ā.
**YOU:** (d) Hóu, ngōh giu kéuih …
**CALLER:** Hóu laak. Mgōi saai. Bāai-baai.
**YOU:** (e) Msái mgōi …

**Vocabulary**

**Leisure activities (CD2; 60)**

Below is a list of popular activities that you might invite somebody out for. Try reading each item aloud. If you have the audio for this book, you can model your pronunciation on the recording.
heui táí-hei to go to the cinema
sihk máahnfaahn to have dinner
heui yám-yéh to have a drink
heui yám-jáu to go for a drink
heui yám-gafē to go for a coffee
heui tiu-móuh to go to a dance
heui yàuh-séui to go swimming
heui dá-bō to play a ballgame
heui tēng-yāmngohk to go to a concert

Specifying the day

When arranging to meet somebody, we need to make it clear which day we are talking about. Read the examples below:

(nī go) sīngkēih-yaht this (coming) Sunday
(nī go) sīngkēih-yāt this (coming) Monday
(nī go) sīngkēih-yih this (coming) Tuesday
hah (go) sīngkēih-yaht Sunday
hah (go) sīngkēih-yāt Monday
hah (go) sīngkēih-yih Tuesday

Note that the other term for week, láihbaai, can be substituted for sīngkēih in the above expressions.

Dialogue 3

(CD2; 61)

John is at home and calls Richard to extend an invitation.

(a) What activity is John suggesting?
(b) Who’s going?
(c) How will they meet up?

JOHN: Wái.
RICHARD: Wái, neih haih John a?
JOHN: Haih, ngóh haih John.
RICHARD: Ngóh haih Richard. John, tīngmáahn dāk-mh-dākhàahn a? Yáuh móuh hīngcheui heui táí-héi a?
JOHN: Dākhàahn a. Tái géi dímjūng a?
RICHARD: Mjī. Dáng ngóh séuhng-mohng táí háh sihgāan sīn.
Unit 15: *On the telephone*

**Dialogue 4**

*(CD2; 62)*

William wants to buy a new cell phone plan but he is not sure which one is best for his needs. He calls his friend Linda for her opinion.

(a) What plan does Linda have?
(b) What plan does her brother have?
(c) What plan does William choose?

---

**LINDA:** Wái.

**WILLIAM:** Wái. Linda, ngóh haih William.

**LINDA:** William, dím a?

**WILLIAM:** Géi hóu. Ngóh séung chêut bou saugêi, Néih wah bîngo toih tûhng maaih gaaiwahk hou a? Néih tûhng néih gôgo yuhtng gân mâyêh gaaiwahk a?

**LINDA:** Ngóh yuhtng gân Hêung Góng Dihnsheun ge yuhtfai gaaiwahk, ngóh gôgo jauh yuhtng gân chûhjik kâak.

**WILLIAM:** Yêtgo yuht, yau géi dô fânjûng a? Dihnwaah yâuhmóuh dâk seuhng môhng ga?

**LINDA:** Ngóh ge gaaiwahk múih go yuht yâuh yêt chên yi baak fânjûng, bâau móuhhaang dyûnseuhn, dihnwaah yî gîng yàuh WiFi.

**WILLIAM:** Néih gôgo nê?

**LINDA:** Kéiuh ge chûhjikkâak haïh múih faanjung luhk sîn, múih chi jeui siu yiu jään jik ngh sahp mân. Daahnhaïh Keïuh dihn waah mouh WiFi. Kéiuh gaaiwahk pêhng hóudô.

**WILLIAM:** Gam, ngóhnám ngoh yînggôi wuih máaih chûhjik kâak lak. Mgôi néih bôngmôhng!

**LINDA:** Msai mgôi.
Idioms and structures

The items in the list below appear in the same order as they do in the dialogues above. The *italicized* items are new items. In the notes, numbers in brackets refer to the expressions listed below.

1. Tingmáahn
dák-mh-dákhàahn a?

   Are you free tomorrow night?

2. Yáuh móuh hĩngcheui heui táihéi a?

   Are you interested in seeing a movie?

3. Dákhàahn a.

   (I am) free.

4. Dáng ngóh séuhng-mohng táih hãh sihÁan sín.

   Let me go online and check the times.

5. Ngóh dou heiyún houh, faat go dyún seuhn bêí néih.

   I’ll text you when I get to the movie theater.

6. Néih tûhng néih gōgo yuhng gán mätyéh gaaïwahk a?

   Which plan do you and your (older) brother have?

7. Yuhtfai gaaïwahk, chûhjik kāat

   monthly plan, prepaid card
To invite someone out, it is common to begin by asking if he or she is free on a certain day:

Néih sìŋkèih yaht yehmáahn dák-mh-dákhaahn a?
Are you free on Sunday evening?

Dákhaahn is the adjective for “free,” and in the example above it is used to form a choice-type question. If the answer is positive, another question can be asked, this time to find out if the person is interested in a certain type of activity:

Néih yáuh móuh hingcheui tùhng ngóh heui táí-héi a?
Are you interested in going to a movie with me?

The choice-type question above is formed with the existential verbs yáuh and móuh, followed by the noun for “interest,” hingcheui. In Dialogue 4, yáuhmóuh is also used, in Díhnwah yáuhmóuh dák séung môhng ga? “Can you go on the Internet?”

Another way of suggesting an activity is to use the expression bátyûh with the sentence-final particle ā:

Tînheî gam yiht, bátyûh heui yáuh-séui ā.
The weather is so hot. Why don’t we go swimming?

Dâaîhgâ dòu dákhaahn. Bátyûh heui táí-hei ā.
We’re all free. Why don’t we go to see a movie?

Or you can come straight to the point in inviting somebody out:

Ngóh séung chéng néih heui yämngohkwuí. Mjî néih dák-mh-dákhaahn nê?
I’d like to invite you to a concert. I was wondering whether you were free?

The pattern Mjî … nê is a way of asking a question, and functions exactly like the English pattern “I was wondering whether ….,”
The aspect marker -háh

-háh is an aspect marker used after a verb to indicate that an action is to be taken for a short while. For example, when John says he’ll look up the times online, that should take just a moment, as is indicated in Dáng ngóh séuhng-mohng tái háh sihgāan sīn “Let me go online and check the times.”

Exercise 2 Housewarming

Amy has moved into a new flat and wants to invite Kitty to her new home for dinner. She phones Kitty to discuss a date. Read the conversation, then answer the following questions:

(a) Why can’t Kitty make it on Tuesday evening?
(b) Why can’t she make it on Wednesday evening?
(c) What day do Amy and Kitty eventually agree on?
(d) What time does Amy expect Kitty?

AMY: Wái, haih-mh-haih Kitty a?
KITTY: Haih a. Néih haih Amy âh?
AMY: Kitty, ngóh séung chéng néih làih ngóh ngūkkéi sihk máahn-faahn a. Néih hah sīngkēih-yih dák-mh-dākhāahn a?
AMY: Gám, láihbaai-sāam máahn nē?
AMY: Hóu lā. Gám jauh láihbaai-ngh máahn lā. Néih yehmáahn chāt dīm bun lēih douh ngóh ngūkkéi, dák-mh-dāk?
KITTY: Dák, móuh mahntāih.

Exercise 3 When are you free?

Your friend Stephen is leaving Hong Kong at the end of the week, and has phoned to suggest having a drink together after work some time this week. You have a very busy week, and you are trying desperately to fit in a time for Stephen. Complete the conversation with reference to the diary:
STEPHEN: Wái, ngóh haih Stephen a. Ngóh sīngkèih-luhk jauh fāan Méihgwok la. Néih nǐ go láihbaai géisih dākhàahn tūhng ngóh yám-yéh a?

YOU: Ngóh nǐ go láihbaai hóu móhng a.

STEPHEN: Sīngkèih-sāam máahn dāk-mh-dāk?

YOU: (a) Mdāk a. Ngóh yiu ...

STEPHEN: Gám sīngkèih-sei ně?

YOU: (b) Sīngkèih-sei ...

STEPHEN: Sīngkèih-yih ně?

YOU: (c) ... Bātyūh ...

STEPHEN: Hóu lá. Dou sīh gin lā.

Recognizing Chinese characters

大會堂    City Hall
文化中心    Cultural Center
藝術中心    Arts Center
演藝學院    Academy for Performing Arts
Communicative activities

1. With a Cantonese-speaking partner, role-play several telephone conversations based on the dialogues in this lesson. Call and invite your partner to a concert or a movie or see if a certain manager is in the office.

2. You are planning a party at your house. Play the role of the host while your partner plays the various friends as you call to invite them. Switch roles and try again.

Cultural points

Cell phones and numbers

Hong Kong and China generally are passionate about mobile (cell) phones. You will find more models of phones in Hong Kong than in almost any other place in the world. The choice of phone number is quite important, particularly in business. For example, the number eight (八 baat) is considered lucky and therefore highly desirable in a phone number, because it sounds a little like the word for prosper (發 faat). In contrast, the number four (四 sei) is undesirable, because it sounds a little like the word for death (死 séi). This practice of number selection extends to all sorts of domains in Chinese culture. A license plate with eights can command huge sums in government auctions, flight numbers to and from China often contain 8, and the opening ceremony of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing began at 8 seconds and 8 minutes past 8 p.m. (local time) on August 8, 2008.

Visiting a Chinese home

Visiting a Chinese home for dinner or for other formal activities invokes certain customs. It is considered polite to bring a gift or certain foods. Traditionally, it has been common to bring nicely packaged seasonal fruit (but for reasons mentioned above, never four of anything!). It is also common to bring a gift box of imported chocolates or similar items. Many supermarkets often have sections just for gifts of this sort, including special gift bags. During holiday seasons, such as the mid-autumn festival, you might bring a special item like moon cake.
Translations of dialogues

Unit 6

1
CARMEN: Mrs. Lam, your furniture is really beautiful.
MRS. LAM: Thank you. I like my furniture very much too.
CARMEN: How much did this sofa cost?
MRS. LAM: I bought this sofa for $12,500.
CARMEN: So, how about the dining table?
MRS. LAM: The dining table cost $7,000. The dining chairs were $800 each.
JOHN: I especially like this coffee table. How much was it?
MRS. LAM: The coffee table cost $4,600.

2
JOHN: Jack, I would like to buy a decent tennis racket. About how much would one cost?
JACK: A decent tennis racket would cost about $1,000.
JOHN: So how about a nice pair of running shoes? How much would they cost?
JACK: A pair of running shoes would cost about $500.
CARMEN: I would like to buy a bicycle. How much would that cost?
JACK: A good bicycle would cost about $8,000.

3
KATHY: BAAK Yu Ping, is sending a letter in Hong Kong expensive?
BAAK YU PING: Sending a letter in Hong Kong is quite cheap.
KATHY: So how much is it to send a letter?
BAAK YU PING: Sending a local letter costs only $1.40.
KATHY: That is really cheap! So how much would it cost to send a postcard to the U.S.?

BAAK YU PING: Sending a postcard to the U.S. would cost $2.40. To send a letter to the U.S. would cost $3.00 each.

KATHY: So how about a surface letter? How much would that cost?

BAAK YU PING: Sending a surface letter would be cheaper—$2.00 each.

Unit 7

1

EMILY: Carmen, how do you get to work in the morning?
CARMEN: I usually take the subway to work.
EMILY: So how long does it take to go by subway?
CARMEN: It takes about 45 minutes.
EMILY: Does it really take as long as 45 minutes?
CARMEN: It does.
EMILY: So how about you, John? What means of transportation do you take to go to work?
JOHN: I drive to work.
EMILY: So how long does it take by car?
JOHN: It takes about 25 minutes by car. What about you Emily? How do you get to work?
EMILY: I don’t need to take any means of transportation. I walk to work. I walk for half an hour and that’s all it takes.
CARMEN: That is pretty quick!

2

HO SYUT HWA: Jack, where do you live?
JACK: I live on an outlying island.
HO SYUT HWA: So do you need to take a ferry to work?
JACK: Yes.
HO SYUT HWA: So how long does the ferry take?
JACK: The ferry takes an hour and ten minutes. So how about you, HO Syut Hwa? How do you get to work?
HO SYUT HWA: I usually take a taxi to work. It takes about ten minutes and I am there.
JOHN: Richard, do you need to commute to work?
RICHARD: Yes, I do. I have to take the subway and a bus to work.
JOHN: So how long does it take?
RICHARD: I leave home at 8 a.m., and then walk 10 minutes to the subway station. Then I take a half-hour subway ride and afterwards a 20-minute bus ride. I arrive at work about 9 a.m.
JOHN: So how long does it take altogether?
RICHARD: From home to the office it takes about an hour.

MRS. WONG: Mrs. Lam, how do you get to school in the morning?
MRS. LAM: I live far away. It takes an hour for me to get to the school. I have to walk for 10 minutes first to get to the train station, then I take a 25-minute train ride and transfer to the subway for 20 minutes. Finally, I have to walk another 10 minutes and only then do I arrive at the school.
MRS. WONG: So it really does take a whole hour (to get to work)!

Unit 8

JOHN: Mrs. Lam, your house is quite large.
MRS. LAM: Yes, I suppose it is quite large.
JOHN: So how many rooms does it have in all?
MRS. LAM: In all it has two large rooms and four smaller rooms: a sitting room, a dining room, three bedrooms, and a study. It also has a kitchen, two bathrooms, and a domestic worker's room.
CARMEN: So how many people are in your family in all?
MRS. LAM: There are six people altogether. My husband and I, my mother and father, as well as my son Kenny and daughter Angel.
CARMEN: How old are Kenny and Angel?
MRS. LAM: Kenny is eight years old and Angel is seven.
JOHN: Mrs. Lam, where is your husband?
MRS. LAM: My husband is still at his office. He is having a meeting. I’m sure he will be back at 7.
JOHN: And what about your father and mother?
MRS. LAM: My mother is in the kitchen cooking and my father is in his room watching television.
CARMEN: And what about Kenny and Angel?
MRS. LAM: Kenny went swimming and Angel is at school.
CARMEN: Where did Kenny go swimming?
MRS. LAM: He went swimming at the pool.
JOHN: So what is Angel doing at the school?
MRS. LAM: Angel went to the school to sing. They will return home around 6:30.

Unit 9

MRS. LAM: Angel, your clothes aren’t washed yet. Can you wash them for me?
ANGEL: No mom! I have to go swimming.
MRS. LAM: So how about you, Kenny? Will you help me wash the clothes, OK?
KENNY: OK. No problem.

MRS. LAM: Kenny, can you help to clear the table?
KENNY: OK.
MRS. LAM: And Angel, can you please wash the dishes?
ANGEL: OK, I’ll wash (the dishes).
MRS. LAM: So George, can you empty the trash bin?
MR. LAM: I can.

MR. LAM: I am looking for someone to type several letters for me. Who is free?
VICKY: I have time. I can do it for you, Mr. Lam.
MR. LAM: Thanks, Vicky. Is there anyone who can help me do some photocopying?
WONG PUI WAN: I’ll help you make copies, Mr. Lam.
MR. LAM: Thank you so much, WONG Pui Wan.
WONG PUI WAN: You are welcome.

4

MRS. LAM: There is a lot of ironing to be done. Who can help get the clothes ironed? Kenny, how about you?
KENNY: No, I am watching soccer. How about Angel?
ANGEL: OK. I will help you iron.
MRS. LAM: Thanks, Angel. Another thing, the floor is dirty, who can help sweep?
MR. LAM: I can help sweep.
MRS. LAM: Thanks, George. So Kenny, when will you finish watching soccer?
KENNY: There are still fifteen more minutes to go and then I'll finish watching it.
MRS. LAM: So when you have finished watching soccer, help me clean the windows, all right?
KENNY: All right, no problem.

Unit 10

1

SALLY: Mom, my handbag is missing. Do you know where my handbag is?
MRS. CHAN: Look! Your handbag is on the sofa.
SALLY: Oh, right. So how about my gloves? I can’t find them.
MRS. CHAN: Your gloves are on the easy chair. Do you see them?
SALLY: I can see them now. Thanks, mom.

2

MR. CHAN: I can’t find my eyeglasses!
MRS. CHAN: Look! Aren’t those your glasses on the coffee table? Do you see them?
MR. CHAN: Where? … Oh, I see them. On the coffee table, as you said.
SYLVAN: Mom, have you seen my comb? I’ve lost it.
MRS. CHAN: Did you say your comb? Look! Isn’t that your comb on top of the television?
SYLVAN: Oh, right. What about my socks? Have you seen them?
MRS. CHAN: Your socks are on the floor. Look, under the dining table.
SYLVAN: I see them now. Thanks, mom.

3

AUNTIE KATE: Sally, I want to buy a pair of shoes. Do you know where I can find a shoe store is?
SALLY: I know there is a shoe store opposite the subway station. The shoes are really nice there.
AUNTIE KATE: So is the shoe store close to here?
SALLY: Very close. It is just a walk of about ten minutes.
AUNTIE KATE: So is there a dress shop nearby? I also want to buy some clothes.
SALLY: There is one, it’s diagonally across from the shoe store.
AUNTIE KATE: That’s great!

4

AUNTIE KATE: Sylvan, I want to go see a movie. Where is the nearest theater to your house?
SYLVAN: The nearest movie theater to here is the Capitol Cinema. Even so it’s quite far away. It takes about 25 minutes to walk there.
AUNTIE KATE: So how long would it take by taxi?
SYLVAN: It is fast by taxi, ten minutes and you are there.

Unit 11

1

WAITER: Sir, what would you like to eat?
JOHN: A bowl of won-ton noodles please and a bowl of congee with mixed meat.
WAITER: Good. One bowl of won-ton noodles and one bowl of congee with mixed meat. Would you like a plate of
**yauchoi** (vegetables with oyster sauce) as well? The choisum is excellent today.

JOHN: Excellent. I would like a plate of **yauchoi** too then.

*(Some time later.)*

JOHN: Waiter, the bill please.

WAITER: That will be a total of $28. Please pay at the front.

2

WAITER: Sir, how many are there (in your party)?

MR. LAM: Four, please.

WAITER: Four? This way.

MR. LAM: OK, thank you.

WAITER: What tea would you like to drink?

MRS. LAM: A pot of jasmine tea please and a pot of Pu-erh tea.

*(After a few minutes the waiter comes back with the teas.)*

WAITER: A pot of jasmine and a pot of Pu-erh. What kind of **dímsām** would you like?

MRS. LAM: Two baskets of Hagaau, one basket of Siumaai, and two baskets of Chasiubaau.

KENNY: I would also like a plate of custard tarts.

ANGEL: And a basket of Fangwo.

WAITER: Very good. Two baskets of Hagaau, one basket of Siumaai, one basket of Fangwo, two baskets of Chasiubaau, and one plate of custard tarts.

*(Some time later the Lams are ready to go.)*

MR. LAM: Waiter, the bill please.

WAITER: Very good.

*(The waiter returns.)*

WAITER: $192 please.

MR. LAM: Here is $200. Keep the change.

WAITER: Thank you.

3

SALESPERSON: Welcome.

CARMEN: One cheeseburger, one large French fries, and one small cola please.

SALESPERSON: To eat here or take away?
CARMEN: To take away.
SALESPERSON: $17.50 please.
CARMEN: Here is $20.
SALESPERSON: Thank you. Your change is $2.50.
CARMEN: Thank you.

4

LEIH MAN CHUNG: Carmen, do you like Japanese food?
LEIH MAN CHUNG: So is Japanese food your favorite?
CARMEN: No, it isn’t. I really like Chinese food.
LEIH MAN CHUNG: So which do you like more?
CARMEN: Between Japanese and Chinese food, I like Chinese food better. How about you, LEIH Man Chung?
LEIH MAN CHUNG: I don’t like Japanese food. I like French and Chinese food, but I like French food better than Chinese food.
CARMEN: So you are just like John. John likes French the best too.

Unit 12

1

PAUL: Peter, how is the weather in New Zealand right now?
PETER: New Zealand is quite cold right now—it’s about 10°C, but nice and sunny. So how about Hong Kong?
PAUL: Hong Kong is really hot right now—about 30°C. It is really humid and not very comfortable.

2

FORECASTER: It is predicted that winds will be northerly tomorrow. The weather will be cold with light rain. The high will be around 15°C and the low around 11°C.

3

JIMMY: Merry Christmas!
OSCAR: Merry Christmas!
JIMMY: Oscar, how is the weather in New York right now?
OSCAR: New York is really cold right now. It is snowing and about −20°C.
JIMMY: So do I need to bring more clothes?
OSCAR: It might be best to bring more (clothes).
JIMMY: OK.
OSCAR: But don’t bring too many clothes because it will get warm again next week.
JIMMY: OK. See you tomorrow, then.
OSCAR: OK. Have a good flight.

WEATHER FORECASTER: It is predicted that today’s weather will be cold and rainy. Everyone must remember to put on more clothes when going out and to bring their umbrellas. Also, it is currently raining so everyone has to drive carefully.

Unit 13

1

JOHN: Wow! You bought so many things?
CHAN SYUT WAI: I have. Things are so cheap.
EMILY: Yes. Look. I bought two blouses, two skirts, and a pair of shoes.
JOHN: And what about you, CHAN Syut Wai? What did you buy?
CHAN SYUT WAI: I bought a (women’s) suit, a jacket, and two blouses. Do you think they are pretty?
JOHN: They are quite pretty!
CHAN SYUT WAI: Also, I bought something for you.
JOHN: What is it?
CHAN SYUT WAI: I bought a tie for you. Do you like it?
JOHN: I do. Thanks.

2

CARMEN: Hey, who is the one wearing the overcoat and a hat?
JOHN: The one wearing a hat is Ben, our boss.
CARMEN: So that is Ben? Who is the heavier one wearing a scarf?
JOHN: The one wearing a scarf is Teddy. The one next to Teddy wearing a skirt and high heels is his wife.

CARMEN: Oh, so that is Teddy’s wife?

JOHN: Right. The one wearing high heels and with long hair is Teddy’s wife.

ELZA: Sam, what do you usually wear to work?

SAM: I teach at a university so I don’t need to dress up too much. I usually wear a shirt and slacks.

ELZA: Do you need to wear a tie?

SAM: I don’t necessarily have to wear a tie. But when it gets colder in the winter I usually wear a tie, and when it is hot in the summer I rarely wear one. And how about you, Elza? Do you have to dress up for work?

ELZA: I do. I work in a bank and so I have to wear a skirt and high heels. During the winter I usually wear a suit. But when I am on vacation and don’t need to go to work, I wear a T-shirt, jeans, and casual shoes—it is more comfortable that way.

Unit 14

1

RICHARD: John, have you ever been to China?

JOHN: I have been to China.

RICHARD: So how many times have you been to China?

JOHN: I have been twice.

RICHARD: When did you go?

JOHN: I went once the year before last, and once last year. How about you? Have you been to China?

RICHARD: I have never been to China, but I have been to Taiwan twice.

JOHN: When did you go to Taiwan?

RICHARD: I went to Taiwan last month.

2

HO SYUT HWA: CHAN Syut Wai, have you been swimming this year?
CHAN SYUT WAI: No, I have not been swimming this year. The weather this year has been too cold, but I have played tennis a few times. How about you, HO Syut Hwa? Have you done any sports this year?

HO SYUT HWA: No. I have been very busy this year. I haven't had time to do sports, so I haven't been swimming or played tennis.

3

PETER: John, you went to the United States last month, didn't you?

JOHN: I did. I have just come back from the United States.

PETER: Where did you go in the U.S.?

JOHN: I went to San Francisco and Los Angeles. I went to visit friends.

PETER: How long did you stay in San Francisco?

JOHN: I was in San Francisco for five days.

PETER: So how about Los Angeles? How many days did you stay in Los Angeles?

JOHN: I stayed in Los Angeles for six days.

4

JIMMY: William, you've been to Japan, haven't you?

WILLIAM: I have.

JIMMY: When did you go?

WILLIAM: I went the year before last.

JIMMY: So did you like Japan?

WILLIAM: I really liked Japan. The scenery in Japan is really beautiful. It is very clean everywhere, the people are nice and very polite. However, shopping is really expensive.

JIMMY: Is the food tasty?

WILLIAM: It is just OK and it is really expensive.

Unit 15

1

MR. WONG: Hello, can I speak to CHAN Wing Sang, please.

JIMMY: Sorry, CHAN Wing Sang is not in at the moment. May I ask who is calling?
MR. WONG: I am Mr. Wong. Who is this?
JIMMY: I am CHAN Wing Sang’s colleague Jimmy. Would you like to leave a message, Mr. Wong?
MR. WONG: OK. Please ask him to return my call. My phone number is 3603678.
JIMMY: 3603678. OK, I will have CHAN Wing Sang return your call then.
MR. WONG: OK, thank you so much, Jimmy.
JIMMY: Bye-bye.
MR. WONG: Bye-bye.

2

JOHN: Hello.
SUSAN: Hello, is Carmen in, please?
JOHN: Sorry, Carmen has gone out. May I ask who is calling?
SUSAN: This is Susan. Is that John?
JOHN: Yes.
SUSAN: John, may I leave a message for Carmen?
JOHN: Yes, you may. What is it?
SUSAN: Please tell Carmen that if it rains tomorrow, we won’t be playing tennis.
JOHN: OK. I will tell her then. Does Carmen need to return your call?
SUSAN: No, that is not necessary.
JOHN: OK. Goodbye.
SUSAN: Goodbye.

3

JOHN: Hello.
RICHARD: Hello, is that John?
JOHN: Yes, this is John.
RICHARD: This is Richard. John, are you free tomorrow night? Are you interested in seeing a movie?
JOHN: I am free. What time is the movie?
RICHARD: I don’t know. Let me go online and check the times.

(Richard comes back on the phone after finding the show times online.)

RICHARD: Hello. John, there is both a 7 p.m. and a 10 p.m. showing tomorrow night. Which do you want to see?
JOHN: How about the 7 p.m. showing?
RICHARD: OK. I’ll text you when I get to the theater.
JOHN: Great. I’ll see you tomorrow.
RICHARD: See you tomorrow.

4

LINDA: Hello.
WILLIAM: Hello. Linda, this is William.
LINDA: William, how are you doing?
WILLIAM: Pretty well. I want to get a cell phone, and I want to ask you which phone company and cell phone plan you think is the best. Which plan do you and your (older) brother have?
LINDA: I am using a monthly plan from Hong Kong Telecom and my brother has a prepaid card.
WILLIAM: How many minutes do you have each month? Can you go on the Internet?
LINDA: My plan has 1,200 minutes a month, including unlimited texting and the cell phone already has WiFi.
WILLIAM: How about your brother’s?
LINDA: His prepaid card is $0.06 per minute, he needs to add a value of at least $50 each time, but his phone doesn’t have WiFi. His plan is much cheaper.
WILLIAM: I think that I will buy the prepaid plan then. Thanks for your help.
LINDA: No problem.
Key to the exercises

Unit 1

Dialogues
1 (a) New Zealand. (b) The U.S. 2 (a) Australia. (b) English and German. (c) Canada. (d) English and French. 3 (a) Japan. (b) Japanese, English, and Putonghua (Mandarin).

Exercise 1
(a) (i). (b) (i). (c) (ii). (d) (ii).

Exercise 3

Exercise 4
Raul: Filipino; speaks English, Spanish, and Tagalog. Jane: Australian; speaks English, French, and Italian. Bruce: American; speaks English, German, French, and Spanish. Antonia: Canadian; speaks English, French, and Italian. (a) 4. (b) 6. (c) Bruce. (d) English. (e) Spanish and Italian. (f) Tagalog and German.

Unit 2

Dialogues
1 (a) Mangoes. (b) 4. (c) $20. 2 (a) Oranges. (b) 6. (c) $15. 3 (a) Grapes. (b) One pound. (c) $20.
Exercise 1
(a) (i). (b) (iii). (c) (i). (d) (ii).

Exercise 2
(a) Dī léi ... yāt go. (b) Dī sāigwā ... yāt bohng. (c) Dī muhkgwā ... yāt bohng. (d) Dī bóölōh ... yāt go. (e) Dī laihjī ... yāt bohng.

Exercise 3
(a) Sei mān yāt bohng. (b) Ngh mān yāt go. (c) Sahp mān sāam go. (d) Sahp mān sei go. (e) Gāu mān yāt go.

Exercise 4

Exercise 5
(a) Hawker A. (b) $86.

Exercise 6
Grapes—$15 a pound; kiwifruit—$3 each; apples—$3 each; papa-yas—$8 a pound; water-melons—$2 a pound; oranges—$10 for 4; pears—$10 for 4.

Exercise 7
(b) Ngóh yiu yih-sahp go Méihgwok cháang. (c) Ngóh yiu léuhng bohng Méihgwok tàihi. (d) Ngóh yiu sāam go Féileuhtbān bóölōh. (e) Ngóh yiu baat go Féileuhtbān mōnggwó. (f) Ngóh yiu yāt dā (or sahp-yih go) Oujāu léi.

Unit 3
Dialogues
1 (a) Swimming, playing tennis, and listening to music. (b) Listening to music, reading, and watching television. 2 (a) Window-shopping and watching movies. (b) He likes watching movies, traveling, and taking pictures, but he doesn’t like window-shopping. 3 (a) Once a week. (b) Saturday. 4 (a) About twice a week. (b) About twice a year.
Exercise 1
(b) Kéuih mjüngyi yàuh-séui. (c) Kéuih géi jüngyi táí-syú. (d) Ngóhdeih mhaih géi jüngyi táí-dihnsih. (e) Kéuihdeih mjüngyi cheung-gō.

Exercise 2

Exercise 3
(a) (iii). (b) (iii). (c) (ii).

Exercise 4
(b) Ngóh yàt go láihbaai hàahng léuhng chi gāai. (c) Ngóh yàt go yuht táí léuhng chi hei. (d) Ngóh yàt go láihbaai yàuh sâam chi séui. (e) Ngóh yàt nihn heui sei chi léuihhâhng.

Exercise 6
Example answer: Emily tûhng WONG Git dōu jüngyi táí-hei.

Unit 4
Dialogues
1 (a) 4:30. (b) 5:30. 2 (a) 7 p.m. (b) 4:30 p.m. (c) 9:30 a.m. 3 (a) 7:15 a.m. (b) 11:30 p.m. (c) John gets up at 8:30 a.m. and goes to bed at about 12 midnight. 4 (a) 9:30 p.m. (b) 6:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. (c) 7:30 p.m. 5 (a) At 6 this evening. (b) At 8:30 this evening. (c) Horse-racing is shown at 9:35 tomorrow evening.

Quick practice 1
(a) seuhngjau gáu dîm sahp. (b) seuhngjau sahp-yât dîm cháht. (c) seuhngjau sahp dîm sei. (d) hahjau ngh dîm sahp-yât. (e) hahjau luhk dîm ngh. (f) hahjau sâam dîm baat. (g) seuhngjau cháht dîm bun.

Quick practice 2
(b) sei dîm yât go jih. (c) sahp dîm léuhng go jih. (d) gáu dîm sahp go jih. (e) sâam dîm gáu go jih.
Exercise 1

(b) Yihgā (haih) sāam dím chāt. / Yihgā (haih) sāam dím sāam-sahp ngh fān. (c) Yihgā (haih) gāu dím sahp-baat fān. (d) Yihgā (haih) sahp-yāt dím ngh-sahp yih fān. (e) Yihgā (haih) ngh dím sāam. / Yihgā (haih) ngh dím sahp-ngh fān. / Yihgā (haih) ngh dím yāt go gwāt.

Exercise 2

(a) (i). (b) (ii). (c) (iv). (d) (ii).

Exercise 3


Exercise 4

(a) Gàmmáahn chāt dím yāt tūhng sahp-yāt dím gāu yāuh sānmān tái. (b) Gàmmáahn chāt dím ngh tūhng sahp-yih dím yīh yāuh tīnhēi tái. (c) Yāuh. Gàmmáahn baat dím bun yāuh géiluhkpín tái. (d) Gàmmáahn gāu dím bun yāuh hēi tái. (e) Gàmmáahn móu̍h móhng-kāuh tái.

Unit 5

Dialogues

1 (a) John is tall, not too fat and not too thin, and wears glasses. (b) CHAN Syut Wai is fairly thin, not too tall, has short hair, and does not wear glasses. 2 (a) He is tall, thin, wears glasses, has short hair, and is good-looking. (b) She is rather short, has long hair, does not wear glasses, is quite pretty, and looks quite young. 3 (a) Both are 49. (b) 12. (c) 11.

Exercise 2

(b) 52. (c) 38. (d) 71. (e) 96. (f) 49.
Exercise 3
From left to right: Li Ming (Chinese), Michael (American), Christine (French), and Judy (English).

Exercise 4

Unit 6
Dialogues
1 (a) $12,500. (b) $7,000; $800 each. (c) $4,600. 2 (a) About $1,000. (b) About $500. (c) About $8,000. 3 (a) $0.80. (b) $2.30. (c) $1.80.

Quick practice 1
(b) yih-baak ngh-sahp luhk män. (c) yāt-chīn chāt-baak baat-sahp gáu män. (d) ngh-chīn luhk-baak yih-sahp män. (e) yāt-maahn ngh-chīn män. (f) sāam-maahn chāt-chīn ngh-baak män. (g) gáu-sahp sāam maahn chāt-chīn män. (h) ngh-sahp-luhk maahn yih-chīn yāt-baak män. (i) yāt-baak ngh-sahp yih maahn män. (j) sei-baak luhk-sahp baat maahn gáu-chīn män.

Quick practice 2
(b) yāt-chīn lihng sāam-sahp män. (c) yāt-maahn chāt-chīn lihng ngh män. (d) ngh-sahp maahn lihng sei-baak män. (e) yāt-baak gáu-sahp maahn lihng baat-baak män.

Quick practice 3
(b) ngh-baak géi män. (c) sei-chīn yih-baakgéi män. (d) sāam-maahn luhk-chīn géi män. (e) sahp-géi maahn män. (f) gáu-sahp yih maahn géi män. (g) yāt-baak yih-sahp-géi maahn män. (h) sei-baak-géi maahn män.
Quick Practice 4
(b) gáu go yāt. (c) ngh go bun. (d) baat go yih. (e) go sei. (f) luhk hòuhjí.

Exercise 1
Japan—$12,000; Hawaii—$12,000; Korea—$8,500; the Philippines—$4,000.

Exercise 2
5 oranges—$12.50; 4 apples—$6.80; 1 water-melon—$14; total—$33.30.

Exercise 3
(b) Ní jéung chāantóí maaih baat-chīn yīh-baak ngh-sahp màn. (c) Dī chāanyih gáu-baak yāt-sahp màn yāt jēung. (d) Jēung sōfá chāt-chīn baat-baak màn. (e) Ní jéung önlòhkyí yāt-chīn līhng ngh-sahp màn.

Exercise 4
(b) Chris jeui ngái. (c) Diana jeui sau. (d) Chris jeui fēih. (e) Sally fēih-dī. (f) Raul sau-dī. (g) Elsie yáuh daai ngáahn géng. (h) Terry yáuh wūsōu.

Exercise 5
(b) Méihgwok pihnggwó sāam màn yāt go. (c) Jūnggwok pihnggwó lēuhng màn yāt go. (d) Yahtbún pihnggwó y’ah-ngh màn yāt go. (e) Jūnggwok pihnggwó jeui pèhng. (f) Yahtbún pihnggwó jeui gwai. (g) Méihgwok pihnggwó pēhng-dī.

Exercise 6
(b) Carmen sau-gwo Emily. (c) Ní jéung chàhģi dái-gwo go jēung. (d) Go jéung chāanyí leng-dī. (e) Ngóh go móhngkāuhpāak gwai-dī. (f) Ní jéung sōfá jeui pèhng. (g) Carmen ga dāanchē jeui dái.

Unit 7

Dialogues
1 (a) The subway; 45 minutes. (b) He drives; 25 minutes. (c) On foot; 30 minutes. 2 (a) By ferry; 1 hour 10 minutes. (b) By taxi; 10 minutes.
3 (a) 2. (b) 10 minutes. (c) 30 minutes. (d) 20 minutes. (e) 1 hour.  
4 (a) over 1 hour. (b) 10 minutes. (c) 25 minutes. (d) 20 minutes.  
(e) 10 minutes.

Exercise 1

(b) sāam-sahp luhk fānjüng. (c) sei-sahp ngh fānjüng or gáu go jih. 
(d) ngh-sahp ngh fānjüng or sahp-yāt go jih. (e) yāt go jüngtāuh ngh-sahp fānjüng or yāt go jüngtāuh sahp go jih. (f) léuhng go jüngtāuh chāt fānjüng.

Exercise 2

Jim: Home \rightarrow walk (15 minutes) \rightarrow ferry (50 minutes) \rightarrow walk (10 minutes) \rightarrow office.
Bill: Home \rightarrow walk (5 minutes) \rightarrow bus (15 minutes) \rightarrow MTR (30 minutes) \rightarrow office.

Exercise 3

(b) ngh go jüngtāuh ngh-sahp ngh fānjüng. (c) luhk yaht. (d) yāt go sīngkēi̯/láihbaai lihung sei yaht. (e) sāam go yuht. (f) léuhng nihn lihung sahp-yāt go yuht.

Exercise 4

(b) léuhng go bun jüngtāuh. (c) sei go bun jüngtāuh. (d) ngh yaht bun. (e) gáu go bun sīngkēi̯/láihbaai. (f) chāt go bun yuht. (g) ngh nihn lihung luhk go yuht.

Exercise 6

(c) Ngóh háahng sei go jih jauh fāan dou güngši laak. (d) Ngóh yiu háahng sei go jih sīnji fāan dou güngši a. (e) Ngóh daap ngh sahp fānjüng fóchē, joi háahng sāam go jih, jauh fāan dou güngši laak. (f) Ngóh yiu daap ngh sahp fānjüng fóchē, joi háahng sāam go jih, sīnji fāan dou güngši a.

Exercise 7

daap-bäsi jauh yiu sääam go jüngtàuh laak. (iii) Daap-syùhn yiu yät-baak sei-sahp chät män, yiu daap yät go jüngtàuh sei go jih. 3 Daap-féigéi jeui dái.

**Unit 8**

**Dialogues**

1 (a) 6: 1 sitting room, 1 dining room, 3 bedrooms and 1 study. (b) 6: Mrs. Lam and her husband, her parents, her son Kenny and her daughter Angel. (c) Kenny is eight and Angel is seven. 2 (a) Mr. Lam is still at the office. (b) He is in his room. (c) She is in the kitchen. (d) Kenny has gone to the swimming pool. (e) Angel has gone to her school.

**Exercise 1**

(b) HO Syut Hwa jyú-gán faahn. (c) Kéuih cheung-gán gō. (d) Kéuih dá-gán làahmkàuh. (e) Kéuih táì-gán dihnsih.

**Exercise 2**

(a) He is having a meeting. (b) He is watching television. (c) She is cooking. (d) He is swimming. (e) She is singing.

**Exercise 3**

(b) Ngóh daap deihtit fāan-güng. (c) Kéuih jüngyi táì-héi. (d) Ngóh múihtühng láihbaai-yih dá-móhngkàuh. (e) Ngóh māh-mā fan-gān gaau. (f) Ngóh bāh-bā jüngyi tēng-yāmngohk. (g) Ngóh taai-tāai jüngyi jyūh-yēhsihk. (h) Ngóh jēh-jē wáan-gān yāuhheigēi.

**Exercise 4**

(a) Ngóhdeih gāan ngūk yáuh yät go haaktēng, yät go faahntēng, lēuhng gāan seuihfōng, yät go chyūhfōng tūhng yūt go chisó. (b) Ngóhdeih gāan ngūk yáuh yät go haaktēng, yät go faahntēng, sääam gāan seuihfōng, sāam gāan chūnglēuhngfōng, yät go chyūhfōng tūhng yät gāan gūngyāhnfōng.

**Exercise 5**

(a) Chàhn sīnsāang hái faahntēng yām-gān bējáu. (b) Kéuih hái haaktēng táí-gán dihnsih. (c) Kéuih hái haaktēng táí-gán syū.
Exercise 6
(a) Kéuih heui-jó hàahng-gāai. (b) Kéuih heui-jó tái-jükkàuh. (c) Kenny heui-jó dā-mōhngkàuh. (d) Angel heui-jó tēng-yâmngohk.

Unit 9
Dialogues
1 (a) Washing clothes. (b) Kenny. 2 (a) Kenny. (b) Angel. (c) Mr. Lam. 3 (a) Vicky. (b) WONG Pui Wan. 4 (a) Angel. (b) Mr. Lam. (c) Kenny.

Exercise 1
making the beds ✓
washing the dishes ✓
buying food for dinner ✗
washing the clothes ✗
hanging the clothes out ✓
vacuum-cleaning ✓
cleaning the windows ✓

Exercise 2
(a) Néih hó-mh-hóyíh bōng ngóh dá léuhng fūng seun a? (b) Gám, hó-mh-hóyíh bōng ngóh je sāam būn syü a? (c) Dāk, móuh mahntāih. (d) Gám, tūhng ngóh máaih jēung fōchēfēi, dāk-mh-dāk? (e) Hóu aak. (f) Msái mgōi.

Exercise 3

Unit 10
Dialogues
1 (a) On the sofa. (b) On the easy chair. 2 (a) On the coffee table. (b) On the television set. (c) On the floor under the dining table. 3 (a) Opposite the subway station. (b) About 10 minutes’ walk away. (c) Diagonally across from the shoe store. 4 (a) Capitol Cinema. (b) About 25 minutes. (c) 10 minutes.
Exercise 1
(b) Bá jé hái sōfá gaaklèih. (c) Go ngáahngéng hái deihhá seuhngmihn. 
(d) Go chàhbíi hái syūgá seuhngmihn. (e) Deui töháai hái chàhgēi hah-
mihn. (f) Go séeuibíi hái dihnsih gi seuhngmihn. (g) Jī bāt hái séeuibíi 
tūhng chàhbíi jünggāan.

Exercise 2
(a) bookstore—next to supermarket, opposite flower shop; drugstore 
—diagonally across from bookstore, next to flower shop; electrical 
appliances store—diagonally across from movie theater, next to shoe 
shop; bakery—opposite movie theater, next to supermarket; sweet 
shop—between movie theater and dress shop.

Exercise 3
Hái sōfá seuhngmihn yáuh yāt go sáudóí, yāt jek maht, yāt jek sáu-
maht, tūhng yāt bá jé. Hái sōfá gaaklèih ge deihhá yáuh yāt go 
ngāhnbaau, yāt bá sō, yāt jek töháai. Hái dihnsihgēi seuhngmihn yáuh 
yāt go séeuibíi. Hái dihnsihgēi gaaklèih ge deihhá yáuh yāt jek chàh-
bíi, léuhng jī bāt, tūhng sāam bêng luhkyingdáai. Dihnsihgēi hahmihn 
gō luhkyinggēi mgin-jō.

Exercise 4
(a) Tim Tim jeui káhn. (b) Mhaih. (c) Wing Sing jeui daaih. (d) Dōu 
msyun hōu yūhn, daaihyeuk yiu hàahng sāam go jih. (e) Yáuh léuhng 
gāan, Quicken tūhng Good Foot. (f) Quicken kāhn-dī. (g) Hàahng 
léuhng go jih jauh dou laak.

Unit 11
Dialogues
1 (a) A bowl of won-ton noodles and a bowl of congee with mixed 
meat. (b) A plate of vegetables with oyster sauce (Yauchoi). (c) $28. 
2 (a) A pot of jasmine tea and a pot of Pu-erh tea. (b) 2 baskets of 
shrimp dumplings (Hagaau), 1 basket of pork dumplings (Siumaai), 
2 baskets of barbecued-pork buns (Chasiubaau), 1 basket of shrimp 
and bamboo-shoot dumplings (Fangwo), and a plate of custard tarts 
(Daahntaat). (c) $192. (d) $200. 3 (a) 1 cheeseburger, 1 large French 
fries, and 1 small cola. (b) Taking away. (c) $17.50. 4 (a) Chinese food. 
(b) French food. (c) French food.
Exercise 1

**Food**: 2 hamburgers, 3 hot-dogs, 2 large French fries. **Drinks**: 2 cups of tea, 2 cups of coffee, and 1 orange juice.

Exercise 2


Exercise 3

(a) Sāam wūn yūhďañmihn y’ah sei mān, lēuhng dihp yàuhchoi sahp-yih mān, yāt wūn gahpdāijūk jauh sahp-yāt mān. Jūngguhng sei’ah chāt mān lā. (b) Jáau fāān ngh’ah sāām mān. (c) Dōjeh. (d) Sei wūn wāhñtānmihn, sā’ah luḥk mān, lēuhng wūn yūhďañmihn, sahp- luḥkh mān, sāām wūn ngāuhyuhkjūk, sā’ah mān, lēuhng dihp yàuhchoi, sahp-yih mān. Jūngguhng gāu’ah sei mān lā. (e) Jáau fāān sei-baak lihung luḥk mān. (f) Dōjeh.

Exercise 5

(b) Ngóh bàh-bā jūngyī heui yām-chāh dō-gwo heui tái-hei. or Heui yām-chāh tūhng heui tái-hei, ngóh bàh-bā jūngyī heui yām-chāh dō-dī. or Heui yām-chāh tūhng heui tái-hei, ngóh bàh-bā béigaa jūngyī heui yām-chāh. (c) Ngóh gōh-gō jūngyī dā-lāahmkăuh dō-gwo dā-mōhngkăuh. or Dā-lāahmkăuh tūhng dā-mōhngkăuh, ngóh gōh-gō jūngyī dā-lāahmkăuh dō-dī. or Dā-lāahmkăuh tūhng dā-mōhngkăuh, ngóh gōh-gō béigaa jūngyī dā-lāahmkăuh. (d) Kēuih màhmā jūngyī tēng-sāuyāmgēi dō-gwo tái-dīhnshī. or Tēng-sāuyāmgēi tūhng tái-dīhnshī, kēuih màhmā jūngyī tēng-sāuyāmgēi dō-dī. or Tēng-sāuyāmgēi tūhng tái-dīhnshī, kēuih màhmā béigaa jūngyī tēng-sāuyāmgēi. (e) Ngóh múih-mūi jūngyī hohk-Faatmān dō-gwo hohk-Dākmān. or Hohk Faatmān tūhng hohk-Dākmān, ngóh múih-mūi jūngyī hohk-Faatmān dō-dī. or Hohk-Faatmān tūhng hohk-Dākmān, ngóh múih-mūi béigaa jūngyī hohk-Faatmān.

**Unit 12**

**Dialogues**

1 (a) Quite cold, with temperatures around 10°C, but fine. (b) Very hot, around 30°C, very humid. 2 (a) Cold, with northerly winds and light rain. (b) Yes. (c) 15°C; 11°C. 3 (a) Very cold, with snow. (b) Around
−20°C. (c) Warmer. (d) To bring more clothes but not too many.
4 (a) Cold and rainy. (b) To wear more clothes. (c) To drive carefully.

Exercise 1
Hot and humid; 32°C; 28°C; 78%–89%.

Exercise 2
(a) Seuhnghói yät-yuht dōu géi dung a. Heiwän lhng douh ji baat dou. (b) Yiu a. (c) Seuhnghói yät-yuht mhaih géi dō yūh lohk, hóyih mdaai jē. (d) Gwóngjāu sei-yuht bēigaau nyúhn, tūhngmāaih wūih lohk-yūh. (e) Heiwän daahiyeuk sahp-baat douh ji yih-sahp ngh douh. (f) Hōu chiusāp. (g) Gwóngjāu sahp-yuht wānnnyūhn tūhng gōnchou, bēigaau syūfuhk. (h) Mhaih géi dō yūh lohk. (i) Msái la.

Exercise 3
(b) Hauhyaht wūih jyún lēuhng. (c) Hah go láihbai tinhéi wūih jyún yiht. (d) Śingkēih-luhk wūih hōu daahfūng. (e) Śingkēih-yaht wūih yáuh lēuihbouh. (f) Tīŋgyaht wūih chiuhsāp.

Exercise 4
(a) Samuel sahp-houh śingkēih-sei hái Yīnggwok fāan léih. (b) Keith jauh sahp-baat-houh śingkēih-ngh hái Oujāu fāan léih. (c) Teresa jauh sahp-sei-houh śingkēih-yāt fāan Hēunggōng.

Unit 13
Dialogues
1 (a) 2 blouses, 2 skirts, and 1 pair of shoes. (b) 1 suit, 1 jacket, and 2 blouses. (c) A tie. 2 (a) Ben. (b) Teddy. (c) Teddy’s wife. 3 (a) A shirt and slacks. (b) Not always. He usually wears one in winter, but not in summer. (c) A skirt and high-heeled shoes, and usually a suit in winter. (d) A T-shirt, jeans, and sports shoes.

Exercise 1
3 coats, 4 woollen jumpers, 3 scarves, and 5 pairs of gloves.

Exercise 2
From left to right: Hideki, Hama, Mariko, and Saito.
Exercise 3


**Unit 14**

Dialogues

1  (a) Twice. (b) Last year and the year before last. (c) No. (d) Last month.  
2  (a) Yes. (b) It was too cold. (c) Too busy.  
3  (a) Last month. (b) San Francisco and Los Angeles. (c) 5 days in San Francisco and 6 in Los Angeles.  
4  (a) He likes it very much. (b) The beautiful scenery, the clean surroundings, and the nice, polite people. (c) Shopping and food are very expensive.

Exercise 2

(b) Ngóh chìhn go yuht heui-gwo Yahtbún. (c) Kéuih seuhng go yuht heui-gwo Faatgwok. (d) Kéuih léuhng go yuht chìhn heui-gwo Jünggwok. (e) Ngóhdeih ngh nìhn chìhn heui-gwo Tòiwāan. (f) Kéuihdeih sei go láihbaai chìhn heui-gwo Gānàhdaai.

Exercise 3

Winnie: 3 times to Europe, twice to the U.S., once to Japan, and once to Australia. Kitty: 5 times to China, 4 times to Taiwan, twice to Japan, twice to Europe, the U.S., and Australia. Sally: once to India, 3 times to the Philippines, twice to Japan, 4 times to China, 5 times to Taiwan, once to Europe, 4 times to the U.S., 3 times to Canada, 3 times to Australia, and twice to New Zealand. Sally is the most widely traveled girl.

Exercise 4

(b) Ngóh heui-gwo ngh chi Dākgwok. (c) Ngóh nǐ go yuht táí-gwo léuhng chi hei. (d) Ngóh nǐ go láihbaai dá-gwo léuhng chi móhngkàuh. (e) Ngóh gāmnín heui-gwo sei chì léuihhàhng.
Exercise 5
(a) Ngóhdeih heui-jó Fēileuhtbân, Yandouh, tūhng Tòihwāan ...  
(b) Ngóhdeih sei-yuht heui Fēileuhtbân ge ...  
(c) Ngóhdeih heui-jó luhk yaht ...  
(d) Ngóhdeih juhng yáuh heui Yandouh. Dōu haih sei-yuht heui.  
Heui-jó baat yaht ...  
(e) Juhng yáuh, ngóhdeih ngh-yuht heui-jó luhk yaht Tòihwāan.

Unit 15
Dialogues
1 (a) Mr. Wong. (b) He wants CHAN Wing Sang to ring him back.  
(c) 3603678.  
2 (a) She has gone out. (b) That they will not be playing tennis if it rains tomorrow.  
(c) No.  
3 (a) Going to a movie. (b) John and Richard.  
(c) John will text Richard when he arrives at the theater.  
4 (a) Monthly plan from Hong Kong Telecom. (b) Prepaid card.  
(c) Prepaid card.

Exercise 1
(a) Deui mijyuh, Pam mhái douh wo, or Deui mijyuh, Pam hàahnghō-jó wo.  
(b) Pam wah kéuih daaihyeuk sei dim jüng fāan lēih. (c) Dāk, móuh mahntaih.  
(d) Hóu, ngóh giu kéuih hái ngh dím jüng chihn dá fāan dihnwá bēi néih.  
(e) Msái mgōi. Bāai-baai.

Exercise 2
(a) She has to go to a concert with Peter.  
(b) She has a class on Wednesday evening.  
(c) Friday.  
(d) 7:30 p.m.

Exercise 3
(b) Sīngkêih-sei máahn ngóh yiu hōi-wúi a.  
Abbreviations for grammatical terms

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A

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Aujāu (pw) | Europe

A-yi | aunt

B

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<td>bá (cl)</td>
<td>classifier for long slender objects such as combs and umbrellas</td>
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<td>bēng (cl)</td>
<td>classifier for audio- and video-tapes</td>
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</table>
bìn (+ cl/dem) (qw) which?  chēung (n) window
bindouh (qw) where?  cheung-gō (v-o) to sing
bingo (qw) who?  chēungyūn (n) spring roll
binwáí (qw) who?  chūut (cl) classifier for movies
bōhāài (n) sports shoe  and documentaries
bohng (m) pound (in weight)  chūt-gāai (v-o) to go out
bólō (n) pineapple  chūutmīhn (adv) outside
bōng(sáu) (v) to help  chūt-mūnhháu (v-o) to leave home
bougu (n) report  chī (n) a time
boul (n/m) plum  chīhn (adv) ago, the one
bóuléi (n) Pu-erh (dark) tea  (week, month, year, etc.) before last
bèi (n/m) cup  chīhng (adj) fine (weather)
bün (cl) classifier for books  chīhnnīn (tw) the year before last
bun (n) half  chin (n) money
bungóng (adj) local (in Hong Kong)  chin (num) thousand
bunjihtkwàhn (n) skirt  chūhjik kāat (n) prepaid (phone) card
bunyeh (tw) after midnight  chūng-hōng (n) bed
C  choi (n) food, cuisine
cháai-dāanchē (v-o) to ride a bicycle  chōimáh (n) horse-racing
cháa (n) dining chair  chois (n) a Chinese green vegetable, choisum
cháang (n) orange  chühr jīk kāat (n) prepaid (phone) card
cháangs (adj) orange (color)  chūng-lēuhng (v-o) to take a
chāa (n) dining chair  chyùhfóng (n) kitchen
chāb (n) tea  chūhjik (n) toilet
chābhūi (n) cup  Chiu Chow dialect
chāh (n) tea  Chiuhjauwā (n) Chiu Chow dialect
chāhbi (n) cup  chihsāp (adj) humid
chāhggōi (n) coffee table  chīukāp-  supermarket
chāhmmáahn (tw) yesterday evening,  síhchēu (n) the year before last
last night  chóihng (n) bed
chāhmyaht (tw) yesterday  choi (n) food, cuisine
chāsiubāau (n) steamed barbecued-  choi (n) food, cuisine
pork bun  choimáh (n) horse-racing
chāt (num) seven  chois (n) a Chinese green vegetable, choisum
chāt'ah (num) seventy (elided form)  chühr jīk kāat (n) prepaid (phone) card
chāt-yuht (tw) July  chūng-lēuhng (v-o) to take a
chē (n) car  chyùhfóng (n) kitchen
chēfōng (n) garage  choi (n) food, cuisine
chēheu (adv) diagonally across  choi (n) food, cuisine
chēj (n) custard tart  choi (n) food, cuisine
dá (v) to hit, to type  choi (n) food, cuisine
da (num) a dozen  choi (n) food, cuisine
daahntāat (n) custard tart  choi (n) food, cuisine
daai (v) to put on (eyeglasses,  choi (n) food, cuisine
a cap, a hat, etc.);  choi (n) food, cuisine
to take, to bring  choi (n) food, cuisine
daaih (adv) large  choi (n) food, cuisine
daaihfūng (adv) windy  choi (n) food, cuisine
daaihgā (prn) everyone  choi (n) food, cuisine
daaihohk (n) university  choi (n) food, cuisine
daaihlau (n) overcoat
daaihlou (n) elder brother
Daaihwuih- City Hall
tòhng- Concert Hall
Yämngohk-
tèng (pw) roughly, approximately
daaihyeuk (adv) roughly, approximately
daan (n) bill
daanch (n) bicycle
daap (v) to take (a means of transport)
daap cho sin (ie) wrong number (on the phone)
da-bô (v-o) to play a ballgame
da-dihnwá (v-o) to make a phone call
dái (adj) good value
dàih-dái (n) younger brother
da-jih (v-o) to type
dak (v-prt) OK, all right
Dàkgwok (pw) Germany
dák (adj) low
dáih-dái (n) younger brother
da-jih (v-o) to type
Dí (prn) some
-dí (prt) streetcar, tram
dihnhè (n) elder brother
dihnhèjaahm (n) streetcar, tram stop
dihng (conj) with two alternatives
dihnheipóu (n) electrical appliance store
dihnseun (n) telecom
dihnsih (n) television
dihnsihgèi (n) television set
dihnsihkehk (n) television drama
dihnwá (n) telephone
dihnhyìng (n) movie
dihp (m) plate
díksi (n) taxi
díms (n) snacks, generally steamed, served in a tea-house
dímsám (n) what is the price?
dímsaiaahm (n) taxi rank
dim (qw) how?
dim (n) shop, store
dim(jung) (tw) o’clock
dim laahpsaap to empty the trash bin
díyéung (qw) what does he/she look like?; how?, what?
dip (n) plate
dö (adj) many, much
doihsyù (n) kangaroo
döjeh (ie) thank you (for a gift)
döjeh saai (ie) thank you very much
Döljehnödó (pw) Toronto
dò (adj) also, still
dòu (v-prt) there
dou (prt) there
douh (adv) there
dóu-laahpsaap to empty the trash bin
dòu (v-prt) there
d.deui (m) pair
d.deuimihn (adv) opposite, across the road
deui mîyuh (ie) Sorry!
dí (prn) some
diá-làahmkauh to play basketball (v-o)
dái-làahmkàuh to play basketball (v-o)
dà-leun (n) kangaroo
dà-leun (n) German (language)
dài-hdái (adj) good value
dí-maaih a? (ie) what is the price?
díms (n) snacks, generally steamed, served in a tea-house
dímsaiaahm (n) taxi rank
dímsám (n) what is the price?
díms (n) snacks, generally steamed, served in a tea-house
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díms (n) snacks, generally steamed, served in a tea-house
dímsaiaahm (n) taxi rank
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díms (n) snacks, generally steamed, served in a tea-house
díms (n) snacks, generally steamed, served in a tea-house
díms (n) snacks, generally steamed, served in a tea-house
duhk-syū (v-o) to study
düng (adj) east
dung (adj) cold
Düngging (pw) Tokyo
düngting (tw) winter
dyūn (adj) short
dyūnfu (n) shorts
dyūn seuhn (n) text message

dumping and bamboo-shoot dumpling

F
faahntèng (n) dining room
faai (adj) quick; in a short time
fāan (v-prt) to return
fāan (v) to work at/in ...
fāan ... (ie) to go to work
fāan-gúng (v-o) to go to school
fāan-hohk (v-o) to go to school
faatmán (n) French (language)
fādim (n) flower shop
fan-gaau (v-o) to sleep
fān(jūng) (n) minute
fāngwó (n) steamed shrimp and bamboo-shoot dumpling
garden
fâyûn (n) ticket
fēi (n) ticket
fēifaatpóu (n) barber’s shop
fēigéi (n) airplane
fēigēichéuhng (n) airport
fēih (adj) fat
Fēileuhtbān (pw) the Philippines
Fēileuhtbānwá (n) any of the languages of the Philippines
fēsîk (adj) brown
fōchê (n) train
fōchējaahtm (n) rail station
fōgei (n) waiter
fōng (n) room
fōngbîhn (adj) convenient
fōng-gúng (v-o) to leave work
fu (cl) classifier for eyeglasses
fu (n) trousers, slacks
fu (n) nearby
fuhtahn (adv) Welcome!

duhk-syū (v-o) to study
düng (adj) east
dung (adj) cold
Düngging (pw) Tokyo
düngting (tw) winter
dyūn (adj) short
dyūnfu (n) shorts
dyūn seuhn (n) text message

dumping and bamboo-shoot dumpling

G
ga (cl) classifier for vehicles
ga (prt) to return
gāai (n) street, road
gāaïsih (n) market
gāaiwahk (n) (call) plan
gaaklêih (adv) beside
gāan (cl) classifier for houses, rooms and shops
gau-su-yū (v-o) to teach (in school or university)
gāautûng (n) transportation
gafē (n) coffee
gahpdâjûk (n) congee with mixed meat
gâjê (n) elder sister
gakèih (n) holiday
ga la (prt) to leave work
ga laak (prt) to work at/in...
ghâm ... (ie) so ..., then ...
gam (adv) so, such
gâm (v-o) to go to work
gâm (tw) this year
ghâm (tw) this year
gâm (ie) such a long time
ghâmyaht (tw) today
gâmyêuâng (adv) in this way, like this
-gân (asp) progressive aspect marker
Gânahdaaih (pw) Canada
gânjyu (adv) and then
gâsi (n) furniture
gâu (num) nine
gâu'ah (num) ninety (elided form)
gauhnin (tw) last year
gâu-yuht (tw) September
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cantonese</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ge (prt)</td>
<td>quite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>géi (adv)</td>
<td>several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>géi (num)</td>
<td>to send something by post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gei (v)</td>
<td>airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gêichêuhng (n)</td>
<td>to remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geidmj (qw)</td>
<td>how much, how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>géido (qw)</td>
<td>what time?</td>
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<tr>
<td>géid seisui (ie)</td>
<td>how old?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>géiluhkpín (n)</td>
<td>documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>géinoih (qw)</td>
<td>how long (a period of time)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gei-seun (v-o)</td>
<td>to send something by post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>géisih (qw)</td>
<td>when?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>génggân (n)</td>
<td>scarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gihn (cl)</td>
<td>classifier for items of clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gin (v)</td>
<td>to see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giujouh (v)</td>
<td>to be called, named that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gó (dem)</td>
<td>classifier for people, roundish objects such as apples and custard tarts, containers such as bowls and cups, physical spaces such as rooms and airports, and many abstract concepts such as measures of time such as a fifteen-minute unit of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go (cl)</td>
<td>to go window-shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go (num)</td>
<td>to walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>góbín (adv)</td>
<td>over there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gôh-gô (n)</td>
<td>elder brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goldâk (v)</td>
<td>to feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gön(chou) (adj)</td>
<td>dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gông (v)</td>
<td>to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gông-gân (ie)</td>
<td>line busy (on the phone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gônjeing (adj)</td>
<td>clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gôu (adj)</td>
<td>tall, high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gôudaal (adj)</td>
<td>big (in body build)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gôu-gôu-sau-sau (ie)</td>
<td>tall and thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gôujanghłaah (n)</td>
<td>high-heeled shoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gûnhéi faat-chóih (ie)</td>
<td>Chinese New Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gûnsi (n)</td>
<td>office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gûngyânhfông (n)</td>
<td>servant’s room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwai (adj)</td>
<td>expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwai (adv)</td>
<td>honorably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwât (n)</td>
<td>a fifteen-minute unit of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-gwo (prt)</td>
<td>experiential aspect marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-gwo (asp)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cantonese–English glossary

hauhmihn (adv) behind
hauhsäang (adj) young
hăuseun (n) message
hei (n) movie, film
héif (v) to like
héi-s (v-o) to get up
heiw (n) temperature
heiyún (n) movies, cinema
heui (v) to go
heui-g (v-o) to go out
heui-léuihhàhng (v-o) to go traveling
Hbänggông (pw) Hong Kong
hángleem (n) banana
hángleem j (n) jasmine tea
hinecheui (n) interest
hohkhaauh (n) school
hohks (n) student
Hòhngwok (pw) Korea
hòhnláahng (adj) cold
Hòhmán (n) Korean (language)
hóit (n) beach
hóiw (v-o) to be at/have a meeting
hólohh (n) cola
honbóub (n) hamburger
hóu (adj) good, decent
hóu (adv) very, quite
hóuhji (n) a ten-cent unit of money
houh(máh) (n) number
hóúsihk (adj) delicious
hóutái (adj) good to see (of a movie or television program)
hóutën (adj) fine, sunny (weather)
hóuwáan (adj) fun to do, fun to visit, etc.
hóyih (mv) can, could
húngsíkh (adj) red
húngyàuh (n) air-mail

jaauhýüh (n) shower (of rain)
ja-chê (v-o) to drive a car
jái (n) son
jânhaih (ie) really
jâp (v) to tidy up
jâp-chöhng (v-o) to make the bed
jâp-tái (v-o) to clear the table
jáu (v) to leave
jâu (n) continent
jau (conj) (if …) then
jâuwâih (n) surroundings
jë (n) umbrella
je (v) to borrow
jêih-jê (n) elder sister
jêk (prt) classifier for single pieces of footwear, gloves, windows, animals, boats, dumplings, bananas and hot-dogs
jeuk (v) to wear
jëung (cl) classifier for pieces of furniture with flat surfaces and for other flat objects classifier for long, slender objects such as pens
júh (n) a five-minute unit of time
jî (cl) of time
ji (dou) (v) to know
jih (n) value
jîngchâih (adj) neat (in dress)
jisih (n) cheeseburger
jisihk (adj) purple, violet
jìuhjóu (tw) early morning
jí-p (asp) perfective aspect marker
jóbìn (adv) on the left

J
ja (prt) to add
jääan (v) to add
jáau (v) to give as change
joi (adv) and, again
jóucháan (n) breakfast
jouh (v) to do; is shown (of a movie or television program)
jouh-wahnduhng (v-o) to play sports
jünggáan (adv) in the middle, between
jüngguhng (adv) in total, altogether
Jünggwok (pw) China
Jüngmán (n) Chinese (language)
júnggàhng (adv) in the middle, between
Jüngtäuh (n) hour
jüngyi (v) to like
jyú (v) to cook
jyú-faahn (v-o) to cook a meal
jyuh (v) to live
jyún (v) to become, to turn; to change
jyun (v) to change (transportation)
jyú-yéhsihk (v-o) to cook (food)

K
kâhmmáahn (tw) yesterday evening, last night
kâhmyaht (tw) yesterday
kâhn (adj) near
kâp-chàhn (v-o) to vacuum-clean
kêihsaht (adv) actually
kêihyiwingó (n) kiwifruit
kêuhnggihng (adj) strong
kéuih (prn) he, him, she, her, it
kéuihdeih (prn) they, them
kwâhn (n) dress, skirt

L
lâ (prt)
la (prt)
laahhm (v) to put on (a scarf)
lâahmsik (adj) blue
láahng (adj) cold
laahpsaap (n) trash, rubbish
laak (prt) woollen sweater, jumper
lâh (prt) week
lâihbaai (n) Saturday
lâihbaai-luhk (tw) Saturday
lâihbaai-ngh (tw) Friday
lâihbaai-sáam (tw) Wednesday
lâihbaai-sei (tw) Thursday
lâihbaai-yaht (tw) Sunday
lâihbaai-yât (tw) Monday
lâihbaai-yih (tw) Tuesday
laihji (n) lychee
lâihmaauh (n) good manners
lâu (n) coat
lâuh (v) to stay, to leave something behind (e.g. a message)
léi (n) pear
lêih (prep) from
lêihdóu (n) outlying island
leng (adj) pretty; fresh (of fruit)
lengjái (adj) handsome
Lêuhndéun (pw) London
léuhsng (num) two
léuhsng (adj) cool
lêuhsnghâaih (n) sandals
leuhtsí (n) lawyer
lêuihboou (n) thunderstorm
lêuihmihn (adv) inside
líhng (num) zero
líhng hah (ie) below zero (of temperatures)
líhngngoih (adv) besides
lík jau (ie) take-away
lô (prt)
lohk (v) to fall (rain, snow)
Lohkchaamgèi (pw) Los Angeles
lohk-syut (v-o) to snow
lohk-yúh (v-o) to rain
lohng-sáam (v-o) to hang clothes out to dry
lóuh (adj) old
lóuhbáan (n) boss
lóuhshi (n) teacher
luhk (num) six
luhk’ah (num) sixty (elided form)
luhksik (adj) green
luhkyingdáai (n) video-tape
luhkýnggēi (n) video-recorder
luhk-yuht (tw) June
lühng (n/m) bamboo basket for steaming dimsum
lührngjéng (n) Lung-ching (light) tea

M
m- (adv) negative marker
máahn (tw) evening
maahn (num) ten thousand
máahnfaahn (n) dinner
maahn-máan (adv) slowly
máaih (v) to buy
mái (v) to sell
máaih-féi (v-o) to buy tickets
máaih-sung (v-o) to buy food (for meals)
mái-yéh (v-o) to go shopping
maat-chéung (v-o) to clean shopping
máhfáahn (adj) problematic, troublesome
màh-má (n) mother
màh-má-déi (ie) not that much
Máhnèihl (pw) Manila
Máhnfa-Júngsám (pw) Cultural Center
màhngéihsídım (n) stationery shop
maht (n) sock
máhtáuh (n) ferry pier
mahtwáhn (adj) cloudy
màymi (n) mom, mum
màn (m) dollar
màntyà (qw) what?
mdák a (ie) not OK
meih (adv) not yet
Méihgwok (pw) the U.S.
mèihyúh (n) light rain, drizzle
mèng (n) name
mág (ie) (gone) missing
mgôi (ie) thank you (for a favor); please
mgôi màáihs-dàan (ie) The bill, please!
mgôi saai (ie) Thanks a lot!
mgôi tâi-sou (ie) The bill, please!
mhái douh (ie) not here
mhaih gêi (adv) not that much
mihnbaaupóu (n) bakery
mihnseunpin (n) postcard
mjî (v) to wonder
mòhng (adj) busy
móhngkâuh-páak (n) tennis racket

N
nàahm (adj) south
nàahmjái (n) boy, young man
nàahmyán (n) man
Náuseiilàahn (pw) New Zealand
Náuyeuk (pw) New York
né (prt) you (singular)
né (i) you (plural)
néih (prn) you (plural)
néihdei (prn) you (plural)
néih hóu (ie) How are you?
néui (n) daughter
néuihjái (n) girl, young woman
néuihyán (n) woman
ngáahngéng (n) eyeglasses
ngáam-ngáam just, a short while ago
ngáam saai laak (ie) That’s great!
ngâhnbäau (n) purse
ngâhnhông (n) bank
ngâi(sai) (adj) short (in body build)
ngâuhjâifu (n) jeans
ngâuhhyuhjûk (n) congee with beef
ngâ (num) five
ngâ’ah (num) fifty (elided form)
ngâ-yuht (tw) May
ngô (pm) I, me
ngôhdeih (pm) we, us
ngoîhtou (n) jacket
gûk (n) house, flat
ngûkkéi (n) home
ngûkkéiyâhn (n) family member
ni (dem) this
nibin (adv) over here
nîdouh (adv) here
nîhn (n/m) year
noih (adj) long (time)
noihsin (n) telephone extension
nyûhn (adj) warm

O
önlohkyî (n) easy chair
Oujâu (pw) Australia

P
páau-bouh (v-o) to run (for exercise)
páaubouhhàaih (n) running shoe
pâhngyâuh (n) friend
pëhng (adj) cheap
pëihhàaih (n) leather shoe
pihnggwó (n) apple
pihngsih (adv) usually, generally
pihngyâuh (n) surface mail
-póu (n) shop, store
Póütüngwà (n) Putonghua/

S
sá’ah (num) thirty (elided form)
saai (v-prt)
sääm (n) clothes
sääm (num) three
Säämfâahnsih (pw) San Francisco
sää-am-yuht (tw) March
säänggwó (n) fruit
säänggwódong (n) fruit-stall
säängyaht Happy birthday!
faailohk (ie)
sahp (num) ten
sahp-maahn hundred thousand (num)
sahp-yät-yuht (tw) November
sahp-yih-yuht (tw) December
sahp-yuht (tw) October
sái (v) to wash
sái (adj) west
sai (adj) small
Sâibâanngh (pw) Spain
Sâibâanngh-mán (n) Spanish
sái-dip (v-o) to wash the dishes
säägwâ (n) water-melon
säijjong (n) men’s suit
säijjöngfu (n) trousers, slacks
sailóu (n) younger brother
sái-säam (v-o) to wash clothes
sái-wún (v-o) to wash the dishes,
to wash up
sänmn (n) news
sännihn faailohk Happy New Year!
(sei)

S
säp (adj) humid
sau (adj) thin
sáudó (n) handbag
saugêi (n) cell (mobile) phone
sáumaht (n) glove
sâusin (adv) first of all
säyûh (n) shark
sèhng (adj/adv) whole; fully, completely
sei (num) four
sei’ah (num) forty (elided form)
sei-yuht (tw) April
seuhng (adv) previous (week, month or year)
seuhng (adv) on, above, over
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cantonese</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seuhnghói (pw)</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seuhnghóiwá (n)</td>
<td>Shanghainese (language)</td>
<td>Shanghainese (language)</td>
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<tr>
<td>seuhungjau (tw)</td>
<td>in the morning</td>
<td>in the morning</td>
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<tr>
<td>seuhungmihn (adv)</td>
<td>on, above</td>
<td>on, above</td>
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<tr>
<td>seuhung mohng (v-o)</td>
<td>to go online</td>
<td>to go online</td>
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<tr>
<td>séui (n)</td>
<td>water</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seu (n)</td>
<td>years of age</td>
<td>years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>séuibuí (n)</td>
<td>(drinking) glass</td>
<td>(drinking) glass</td>
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<tr>
<td>seuhihńg (n)</td>
<td>bedroom</td>
<td>bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seun (n)</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>séung (mv)</td>
<td>to want to, to wish to</td>
<td>to want to, to wish to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>séungdei-</td>
<td>relative humidity</td>
<td>relative humidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sǎpðouh (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td>sǎpðouh (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sèutsāsam (n)</td>
<td>shirt, blouse</td>
<td>shirt, blouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sighaan (n)</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sihk (v)</td>
<td>to eat</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sihk-jóuchāan (v-o)</td>
<td>to have breakfast</td>
<td>to have breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>sihk-máahn-</td>
<td>to have dinner</td>
<td>to have dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faahn (v-o)</td>
<td></td>
<td>faahn (v-o)</td>
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<tr>
<td>sihk-ngaan (v-o)</td>
<td>to have lunch</td>
<td>to have lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sihk-yéh (v-o)</td>
<td>to eat</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sihou (n)</td>
<td>hobby</td>
<td>hobby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sík (mv)</td>
<td>can, to know how to</td>
<td>can, to know how to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sík (n)</td>
<td>color</td>
<td>color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Síknèih (pw)</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>símáhn (adj)</td>
<td>smart (in dress)</td>
<td>smart (in dress)</td>
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<tr>
<td>símaht (n)</td>
<td>pantyhose</td>
<td>pantyhose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sín (adv)</td>
<td>first, firstly</td>
<td>first, firstly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing (v)</td>
<td>to be surnamed</td>
<td>to be surnamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singdaan</td>
<td>Merry Christmas!</td>
<td>Merry Christmas!</td>
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<tr>
<td>faailohk (ie)</td>
<td></td>
<td>faailohk (ie)</td>
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<tr>
<td>sínghéi (n)</td>
<td>week</td>
<td>week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínghéi-luuhk (tw)</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínghéi-ngìh (tw)</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínghéi-sāam (tw)</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínghéi-sei (tw)</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínghéi-yaht (tw)</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínghéi-yáh (tw)</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínghéi-yih (tw)</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sínji (adv)</td>
<td>only then</td>
<td>only then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sînsāang (n)</td>
<td>Mr., teacher, husband</td>
<td>Mr., teacher, husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>síubá (n)</td>
<td>minibus</td>
<td>minibus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>síuhóh (n)</td>
<td>primary school</td>
<td>primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>síujé (n)</td>
<td>Miss, young lady</td>
<td>Miss, young lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>síumáai (n)</td>
<td>steamed pork</td>
<td>steamed pork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>síusäm (adv)</td>
<td>carefully(ly)</td>
<td>carefully(ly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>síusíu (adv)</td>
<td>a little, some</td>
<td>a little, some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>só (n)</td>
<td>comb</td>
<td>comb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sôfá (n)</td>
<td>sofa</td>
<td>sofa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sou-deih (v-o)</td>
<td>to sweep the floor</td>
<td>to sweep the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sóyíh (conj)</td>
<td>so, as</td>
<td>so, as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>súksuk</td>
<td>uncle</td>
<td>uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sung (n)</td>
<td>food for cooking a meal</td>
<td>food for cooking a meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syú (n)</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syüdi (n)</td>
<td>bookstore</td>
<td>bookstore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syúfóng (n)</td>
<td>study</td>
<td>study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syúfuhk (adj)</td>
<td>comfortable</td>
<td>comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syüjá (n)</td>
<td>bookcase, bookshelves</td>
<td>bookcase, bookshelves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tái (v)</td>
<td>to see, to watch, to look at, to read</td>
<td>to see, to watch, to look at, to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tai-boují (v-o)</td>
<td>to read the newspaper</td>
<td>to read the newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>táihjí (n)</td>
<td>grape</td>
<td>grape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>táijükkáuh (v-o)</td>
<td>to watch soccer, football</td>
<td>to watch soccer, football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tái-syü (v-o)</td>
<td>to read (books)</td>
<td>to read (books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>táiyühk (n)</td>
<td>sports</td>
<td>sports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tàuhfaat (n) hair
tek-jükkàuh (v-o) to play soccer, football
téng (v) to listen (to)
téng (n) sitting room, dining room
téng-díhnwá (v-o) to answer the phone
téng-sáuyàmgéi (v-o) to listen to the radio
téng-yàmgohk (v-o) to listen to music
tím (adv) in addition
tíchíhung (adj) fine (weather)
tímgáahn (tw) tomorrow
língyaht (tw) tomorrow
língyaht gin lá (ie) See you tomorrow!
tííhei (n) weather
líny (adj) overcast
líyám (adj) T-shirt
tiuh (cl) classifier for long slender objects such as trousers, streets, and sharks
tiú-móuh (v-o) to dance
tóháai (n) slipper
tóhnggwó (n) sweets
tóhnggwódim (n) sweet shop
tóihfúng (n) typhoon
Tóihwáan (pw) Taiwan
tong-sáam (v-o) to iron clothes
tou (cl) classifier for a matching suit of clothes
tóuhsyúgún (n) library
toujöng (n) women's suit
túhng (prep) for, with
(tu)hng(máaih) (conj) and
túhnghohk (n) classmate, schoolmate
túhngsíh (n) colleague
túngsèuhng (adv) usually

W
wá (i) interjection showing surprise
wáahngíng (n) the environment
wáan- yàuheigéi (v-o) to play electronic games
wah ... téng (v) to tell
wáhnduhng (n) sports
wáhntámmihó (n) won-ton noodles
wái (cl) classifier for people
wái (ie) Hello! (greeting on the phone)
wán (v) to look for
Wángówàh (pw) Vancouver
wánnyúhn (adv) warm
wíhnghchíh (n) swimming pool
wo (prt) yellow
wóhngsìk (adv) pot
wúh (m) moustache, beard
wúih (mv) shall, will
wújóu (adv) dirty
wún (n/m) bowl

Y
y’ah (num) twenty (elided form)
yáhn (n) person, people
yacht (n) day
Yahtbúnn (pw) Japan
Yahtmán (n) Japanese (language)
yám (v) to drink
yám-béjáu (v-o) to go for a beer
yám-cháh (v-o) to have dimsum in a tea-house
yám-gáf (v-o) to have coffee
yám-jáu (v-o) to go for a drink
yámgohk (n) music
yámgohkwúi (n) concert
yámtíng (adj) overcast
yám-yén (v-o) to go for a drink
Yandouh (pw) India
Yandouhwá (n) any of the languages of India
yánnwáih (conj) because
yáít (num) one
yátdíhng (adv) sure, surely
yátlouh Have a good flight!
yāt yeuhng (adj) the same
yāt-yuht (tw) January
yāuh (v) to have
yāuh (v) there is/are
yāuh (prep) from
yauhb (adv) also
yauhbíin (adv) on the right
yāuhchoi (n) vegetables with oyster sauce
yāuh géi daaih (ie) how old?
yāuh móuh (v) is/are there?
yāuh-séui (v-o) to swim
yeh (n) thing
yehmáahn (tw) evening, night
yeuhkfóhng (n) drugstore
yeuuhng (cl) classifier for events, things in general
yeuuhng (n) kind, sort
yéung (n) appearance
yí (i) interjection showing mild surprise
yí (n) chair
Yidaaihleih (pw) Italy
Yidaaihleihmán (n) Italian (language)
yih (num) two
yihgā (adv) now
(yihm)yiht (adj) hot
yīnhauh (adv) and then, later on
yihtgáu (n) hot-dog
yīh-yuht (tw) February
yīnggōi (mv) should
Yīnggwok (pw) England, the U.K.
Yīngmán (n) English (language)
yīng-séung (v-o) to take pictures
yīngyan (v) to make photo-copies
Yīnggái-h Hohkyún (pw) Academy for Performing Arts
yīsāng (n) doctor
yīu (v) to need, to want, to take (time), to cost
yīu (mv) must, to have to
yūh (n) rain
yuhchāak (v) to predict
yūhdānmiihn (n) fish-ball noodles
yuhksät (n) bathroom
yūhláuhbāau (n) fishburger
yūhn (adj) far
yūhn (v-prt) month
yuht (n) month
yuhtfái (n) monthly fee
The respective classifiers are given in square brackets where appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>A</strong></th>
<th><strong>B</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>back (to go/to give)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy for Performing Arts</td>
<td>bakery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actually</td>
<td>banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>add, to</td>
<td>bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addition, in afternoon</td>
<td>barbecued-pork bun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>again</td>
<td>barber's shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>ago</td>
<td>basketball</td>
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<tr>
<td>air-mail</td>
<td>bath, to have/take a</td>
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<tr>
<td>airplane</td>
<td>bathroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>airport</td>
<td>be, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all right</td>
<td>beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also</td>
<td>beard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altogether, in total and</td>
<td>be at/in (place), to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and then</td>
<td>because</td>
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<tr>
<td>answer the phone, to appearance</td>
<td>become, to</td>
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<tr>
<td>apple</td>
<td>bed</td>
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<tr>
<td>approximately</td>
<td>bed, to make the bedroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>behind</td>
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<tr>
<td>at (a place)</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
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<tr>
<td>(to be)</td>
<td>below zero</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>beneath</td>
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<td>Aunt</td>
<td>beside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>besides</td>
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<td>sein (mihn)</td>
<td>fāan</td>
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<td>Yīnggaih-Hohkyūn</td>
<td>mihn bāupóu [gāan]</td>
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<td>kēhsaht</td>
<td>hēung jīu [jek]</td>
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<td>jāan</td>
<td>ngānhhōng [gāan]</td>
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<td>juhng, tīm</td>
<td>chāsiubāu [go]</td>
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<td>hahjau</td>
<td>fēifaatpóu [gāan]</td>
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<tr>
<td>joi</td>
<td>läamkāuh</td>
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<td>chihn</td>
<td>chūng-lēuhng</td>
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<td>hūngyāuh</td>
<td>yuhksāt [gāan]</td>
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<td>fēigēi [ga]</td>
<td>haih</td>
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<tr>
<td>(fēi)géichēuhng [go]</td>
<td>hōtāan [go]</td>
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<td>dāk</td>
<td>wūhsōu [jāp]</td>
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<tr>
<td>yauh, dōu, tīm</td>
<td>hái</td>
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<td>jūngguhng</td>
<td>yānwāih</td>
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<td>jyūn</td>
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<tr>
<td>gānjyuh, yihnhauh</td>
<td>chōng [jēung]</td>
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<td>tēng-dihnwá</td>
<td>jāp-chōng</td>
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<td>seuihfōng [gāan]</td>
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<td>pihnggwó [go]</td>
<td>hauhmihn</td>
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<td>daaihyeuk</td>
<td>Bākgīng</td>
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<td>sei-yuht</td>
<td>lihng hāh</td>
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<td>hái</td>
<td>hah (mihn)</td>
</tr>
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<td>baat-yuht</td>
<td>gaaklēih</td>
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<tr>
<td>a-yī</td>
<td>lihngnoopi</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
better, it might be … to
between bicycle big (in body build) bill (the) bill, please!
black blouse blow, to blue boat book bookcase, bookshelves bookstore borrow, to boss bowl boy breakfast breakfast, to have bring, to brother, elder brother, younger brown bus bus stop busy but buy, to buy food (for meals), to buy tickets, to by the way bye-bye

C called, to be can (to be able to) can (may) Canada
diu hóu
jünggáan
dáanché [ga]
góudaaih
dáan [jéung]
mgoi màaih-dáan/
mgoi tái-sou
häaksik
sèutsáam [ghn]
chéui
làahmsik
syüh [jek]
syú [bún]
syúgá [go]
syúdoim, syúdoík [gään]
je
lóubháan [go]
wún [go]
nàahmjái [go]
jóucháán [go]
síhk-jóucháán
daai
daaihlóu, gòh-gò
[go]
daíh-dáï, sailóu
[f]
fësik
bási [ga]
bási jähmahm [go]
móhng
bátgwo
máaih
máaih-sung
máaih-féi
háih nê
báai-báai
guijouh
sík
hóyíh
Gánahdaaih
Canton Cantonese (language) cap car carefully casual (in dress) cell (mobile) phone chair chair, dining chair, easy change (transportation), to change (money), to give cheap cheeseburger China Chinese (language) chips, French fries Chiu Chow dialect cinema City Hall Concert Hall classmate clean clean the windows, to clear the table, to clothes cloudy coat coffee coffee table cola cold colleague color comb come, to comfortable comparatively completely
gwóngjau
concert
congee with beef
congee with
mixed meat
continent
cook, to
cook a meal, to
cool
cost, to
could, might
country
cuisine
Cultural Center
cup
custard tart
cycle, to

dance, to
daughter
day
day before
yesterday
December
decent
delicious
diagonally across
dining chair
dining room
dining table
dinner
dinner, to have
dirty
do, to
doctor
documentary
dollar
dozen
dress
dress shop
drink, to
drive (a
vehicle), to

yámngohkwúï [go]  drugstore
gáuhyuhkjúk  dry
jaú [go]  fongbihn
jyú(-yéhsihk)  jyú-faahn
(ching)leuhng  yiu
hóyih  gwokgá [go]  choi
Mahnfa-Jünsám  bűi, chábűi [go, jek]
daahntaat [go]  cháai-däanché
diu  jiujóu
ja  dăng
jú  sihk
jaht
jaht
jaht
dubroug
jaht
jaht
jaht
jaht
jaht
jaht
jaht
jaht
jaht
jaht
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug
dubroug

E
early morning
east
easy chair
eat, to
eat-in
eight
eight
eleuther
eleuther
early sister
electrical appli-
ance store
empty the
trash bin, to
England
English
(language)
entrance
environment
Europe
evening
evening, this
every (Sunday,
Monday…)
everyone
extensive
extension,
telephone
eyeglasses
dóu-laahpsaap

Yinggwok
Yingmán

mûnhhau [go]
waahnging
Aujâu
yehmâahn
gámâahn
fuhng (sîngkèih-
yat, sîngkèih-
yat…)
daaihghâ
gwai
noihsin
ngâahngéng
[go, fú]

F
fall, to (of rain,
snow)
family member
far
fat
father
February
feel, to

lohk
ngûkkéiyâhn [go]
yûhn
féih
bâh-bâ [go]
yih-yuht
gokdâk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ferry</td>
<td>syùhn [jek]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ferry pier</td>
<td>máhtàuh [go]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fifty</td>
<td>nýh-sahp, nýh’ah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finally</td>
<td>jeui hauh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fine, sunny</td>
<td>hóut cn, tcnchìhng (weather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(weather)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first (of all)</td>
<td>sáus cn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fish-ball noodles</td>
<td>yùhdángmihn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fishburger</td>
<td>yùhláuhb aau [go]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>nýh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floor</td>
<td>deihhá [go]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flower shop</td>
<td>fa dim [gāan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fog</td>
<td>mouh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food (cuisine)</td>
<td>choi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food (for cooking)</td>
<td>sung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>football, soccer</td>
<td>jükkáuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for</td>
<td>tühng seí-sahp, seí’ah seí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forty</td>
<td>Faatgwok dákhaahn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>Faatmán syúhtiù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>leng sîngkèih-ngh, láihbaai-ngh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free, not busy</td>
<td>pâhngyáuh [go] lêih, yàuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French (language)</td>
<td>chîhnmihn sâanggwó [go] sâanggwódong [go]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French fries, chips</td>
<td>sèhng hóuwáan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fresh (of fruit)</td>
<td>gásì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>chêfôhng [go] fâyûn [go] tûngséuhng, pihngsíh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>Dâkmán Dâkgwok häi-sân néuihjái [go]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from (a place)</td>
<td>give, to give (as change), to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>front of, in</td>
<td>glass, drinking glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruit</td>
<td>glove go, to go for a beer, to go for a drink, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruit-stall</td>
<td>gone out go out, to go shopping, to go to school, to go to work, to go traveling, to good good (of a movie or television program) good value grape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendly</td>
<td>haakfóng [gāan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fun, having</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furniture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(language)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get up, to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give, to</td>
<td>bêi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give (as change), to</td>
<td>jáàu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glass, drinking glasses</td>
<td>sëuibi [go, jek] ngáahngéng [go, fu] sáumaht [jek]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glove</td>
<td>heui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go, to go for a beer, to go for a drink, to</td>
<td>yám-bêjáu yám-yéh, yám-jáu hâahnghóí-jó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gone out go out, to go shopping, to go to school, to go to work, to go traveling, to good good (of a movie or television program) good value grape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy birthday!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy new year!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have, to have a good flight!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have to, to Happy birthday! Happy New Year! hat have, to Have a good flight! have to, to Hawaii he</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy birthday! happy new year! hat have, to have a good flight! have to, to Hawaii he</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello! (on the phone)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hair</td>
<td>tâuhfaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>half</td>
<td>bun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hamburger</td>
<td>honbóubáau [go]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handbag</td>
<td>sáudói [go] lengjái lohng-sáam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handsome</td>
<td>sâangyaht faailohk sânnih faailohk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang clothes</td>
<td>móu [déng] yâuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out to dry, to have a good flight! have to, to Hawaii</td>
<td>yâtlouh seuhnfìng yiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hahwâiyyh kéuih wáí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
help, to
her
here
herself
him
himself
hit, to
hobby
holiday
home
Hong Kong
horse-racing
hot
hot-dog
hour
house
how
How are you?
how long (a period of time)?
how much, how many?
how old?
humid
hundred
hundred thousand
husband

I
I
in (a place)
(to be)
include, to
India
Indian
language(s)
inside
interest
introduce, to
invite, to
iron clothes, to
it
Italian (language)
Italy

bōng(sáu)
kéuih
nīdouh
kéuih jiuhghēi
gōu
kéuih
kéuih jiuhghēi
dá
sīhou
gakēi
ngūkkēi [go]
Hēunggōng
choimāh
(yihmyiuh)
yihtgāu [jek, go]
jūngtāu [go]
ngūk [gāan]
dim(yēung)
nēih hōu
gēinoih

gēidō

gēidō seuí/yāuh
gēi daaih
(chiuhsāp
baak
sahp-maahn
sīnsāang

J
jacket
January
Japan
Japanese
(language)
jasmine tea
jeans
July
jumper, sweater
June
just, a short while ago

K
kangaroo
Keep the change!

Kangaroo
kind, sort
kiwifruit
know, to
know how to, to
Korea
Korean (language)

language
large
last night

last year
later on
lawyer
leave, to
leave (behind)
(e.g. a message), to
leave home, to
leave work, to
left, on the
letter
library
like, to
like this
line busy
(on the phone)

Kangaroo
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Kangaroo
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kiwifruit
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Korean (language)

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last night

last year
later on
lawyer
leave, to
leave (behind)
(e.g. a message), to
leave home, to
leave work, to
left, on the
letter
library
like, to
like this
line busy
(on the phone)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>listen (to), to listen to music, to listen to the radio, to</td>
<td>tēng tēng-yāmngohk tēng-sāuyāmēi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little, a live, to</td>
<td>siusiu jyuh büngōng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local (in Hong Kong) London long long (time) look at, to look for, to Los Angeles lost low lunch, to have Lung-ching tea lychee</td>
<td>Lèuhndēun chēuuhng noih tái wán Lohkchaamgēi mgin-jó dāi sihk-ngaan lūhngjéng laihjī [läp]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mail, to man Mandarin (language) mango Manila manners, good many March market May May I ask me meeting, to be at/have a Merry Christmas! message message (text) middle, in the midnight, after midnight million minibus minute</td>
<td>mōnggwó [go] Māhnèihláai láihmaauh dō sāam-yuht gāaisih [go] nīgh-yuht ching mahn ngōh hōi-wūi singdaan faailohk háuseun [go] dyūn seuhn [go] jünggāan bunyeh baak-maahn sūbā [ga] fān(jüng) Miss missing Monday money month month before last monthly fee more morning morning, early most mostly mother moustache movie, film movie theater Mr. Mrs. much music must, to have to myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name named, to be near nearby neat neck-tie need, to need not New York New Zealand news newspaper next month next week next year night nine ninety No problem!</td>
<td>méng giujouh káhn fuhgahn jingchāih tāai [tiuh] yiu msái NáuyeuK Nāusāilāahn sānnmān bouji [jēung] hah go yuht hah go láihbaai/sīngkēih hah (yāt) nīn (yeh)māahn gāu gāu-sahp, gāu’ah móuh mahntāih</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
north
not
Not at all!
(polite response
to mgöi)
not here
not in
not that much
not yet
November
now
number

O
o'clock
October
office
OK
old
on
one
opposite, across
the road
or (in questions
with two
alternatives)
orange
orange (color)
orange juice
ourselves
outlying island
outside
overcoat
over here
over there

P
packet
pair
Pakistan
pantyhose
papaya
Paris
pay, to

bäk
m-, -mh-
msái mgöi
mhái douh
hàahnghöi-jó
måh-má-déi,
mhaih géi
meih
sahp-yá-yuht
yihgá
houh(máh) [go]
dim(jüng)
sahp-yuht
güngsí [gään]
dák
lóuh
seuhng(mihn)
yáh
deuimhn
dihng
cháang [go]
cháangşık
cháangjäp
ngöhdëih jihgéi
lëNdóu [go]
chéutmihn
yämtín, tinyäm
daaihlau [gihn]
nibín
góbin

pear
Peking
pen
person, people
 Philippine
language(s)
Philippines, the
photocopies, to
make
pictures, to take
pier
pineapple
plan (call)
plate (measure)
plate (object)
play a ballgame,
to
play basketball, to
play electronic
games, to
play, soccer,
football, to
play sports, to
play tennis, to
Please …
plum
pork dumpling
post, to
postcard
pot (for tea)
pound (weight)
predict, to
prepaid (phone)
card
pretty
previous (week,
month, year)
Pu-erh tea
purple
purse
put on (a scarf), to
put on (eyeglasses,
cap or hat), to
put on a tie, to
Putonghua
léi [go]
Bäkging
bät [ji]
yåhn [go]
Féileuhtbänwá
Féileuhtbán
yìngyan
yìng-séung
máhtauh [go]
bôlôh [go]
gáaiwahk [go]
dihp
dip [jek]
dá-bö
dá-làahmkauh
wáan-yàuhheigëi
tek-jükkauh
jouh-wahnduhng
dá-móhngkauh
mgöi ...
bouläm [go]
sìumái [go, jek]
gei
mìhngseunpín
[jéung]
wùh
bohng
yuhcháak
chúhjik kàat
leng
seuhng

báau
deui
Bägëisitàan
simáht [deui]
muhkgwá [go]
Bàláih
bèi-chín

bouléi
jísik
ngàhnbàau [go]
laahm
daai
dá-tàai
Pòutúngwá
Q
quick
quite

R
radio
rail station
rain
rain, to
read, to
really
red
relative
humidity
remember, to
report
return, to
ride a bicycle, to
right, on the
roughly,
approximately
rubbish
run, to (for
exercise)
running shoe

S
same, the
San Francisco
sandal
Saturday

scarf
scenery
school
school, primary
school, secondary
schoolmate
see, to
see a movie, to
See you
tomorrow!
sell, to
send something
by post, to
September
servant’s room
seven
seventy
several
shall (in
predictions)
Shanghai
Shanghainese
(language)
shark
she
shirt
shoe
shoe, high-heeled
shoe, leather
shoe, sports
shoe store
shop
shopping, to go
short
short (in body
build)
shorts
should
shower (of rain)
shower, to
(have/take a)
shrimp and
bamboo-shoot
dumpling
shrimp
dumpling
sing, to
sister, elder
sister, younger
sitting room
six
sixty
skirt

maaih
gei(-seun)
gáu-yuht
gúngyáhnfóng
[gáan]
chât
chât-sahp, chât’ah
géi
wüih
Seuňghói
Seuňghóiwá
säyũh [tiuh]
kéuih
sêutsâam [gihn]
häaïh [jek]
góujâanghâaïh
pêihhâaïh
bôhâaïh
häaïhpóu [gáan]
dim, pou [gáan]
máaih-yéh
dyũn
ngái
dyũnfu [tiuh]
yënggoi
jaauhyũh
[chèuhng]
chëng-lëuhng
fângwó [jek]

hâgáau [jek]
cheung-gô
jëhje, gâjë [go]
(mûih-)mûi [go]
haaktëng [go]
lühk
lühk-sahp, lühk’ah
(bunjiht)kwâhñ
[tiuh]
slacks
sleep, to
slipper
slowly
small
small (in body
build)
smart (in dress)
snow
snow, to
so
soccer, football
sock
sofa
some
son
Sorry!
south
Spain
Spanish (language)
speak, to
spectacles,
glasses
sports
sports shoe
spring roll
stationery shop
stay, to
still
store
street
streetcar
streetcar/
tram stop
strong
student
study
study, to
subway
(in Hong Kong,
MTR or Mass
Transit Raiway)
subway
(MTR) station
(säijjông)fu [tiuh]
fan-gaau
tōhái [jek]
maahn-mään
sai
ngáisai
(símâhn
syut
lohk-syut
gám; gam
jükkâuh
maht [jek]
sófá [jêung]
dì
jái [go]
deui mjyuh
nàahm
Saibâanngâh
Saibâanngâhmán
gông
ngáahngéng [fu,
glasses
go]
táiyuhk,
wañduhngh
bōhâaïh [jek, deui]
chéungyún [tiuh]
mânhgeuihmîm
[gâan]
làuh
dōu, juhng
dim, -pôu [gâan]
gâai [tiuh]
dihnhê
dihnhêjaahm
kêuhnggihng
hohksâang [go]
syûfông [gâan]
duhk-syû
deihtit
such
suit (men's)
suit (women's)
summer
Sunday
supermarket
sure(ly)
surface mail
surname, to
have the
surroundings
sweater, jumper
swipe the floor, to
sweats
sweet shop
swim, to
swimming pool
Sydney
T
table, coffee
table, dining
Taiwan
take, to
take (a means of
transport), to
take-away
take pictures, to
tall
tall and thin
taxi
taxi rank
tea
teach (in school
or university), to
teacher
telecom
telephone
telephone, to
telephone
extension
television
gam
säijjông [tou]
toujông [tou]
hahtîn
sîngkèih-yaht,
lâihbaai-yaht
chiukâp-
sîchêuhng [gáan]
yâtdihng
pihngyâuh
sîng
jàuwaïh
lâangsâam [gihn]
sou-deîh
tônggâwò
tônggâwôdim
[gáan]
yâuh-sêuí
wîngchhîh [go]
Sîknèih
châhgeî [jêung]
châantôí [jêung]
Tôihwâán
daai
daap
lîk-jâu
yîng-séung
gôu
gôu-gôu-sau-sau
dîksî [ga]
dîksîjaahm [go]
chàh
gaausîyû
sînsâang, lóuhsi
[go]
dihnsêun
dihnwâ [go]
dâ-dihnwâ
doïhsîn
dihnsîh
television drama  dihnsihkehk [chêu]
dihnsihgéi [go, ga]
waₜ ... tēng
heiwān
sahp
móhngkāuh
móhngkāuhpáak
maahn
mgōi (saai)
tell, to wah ...
tbng
temperature heiwān
ten sahp
tennis móhngkàuh
tennis racket móhngkàuhpáak
ten thousand maahn
thank you (very much) (for a favor) mg di (saai)
tbng
thank you (very much) (for a gift) dd jeh (saai)
then gó
them kéuihdeih
themselves kéuihdeih jihgéi
then, only then cnji
there, over there gódouh
there is/are yáuh
they kéuihdeih
thin
thing
thirty
this
this evening
this year
ten thousand
three
thunderstorm
Thursday

ticket
tidy up, to jāp
tie
time
time, a sīhgaan
today
Tokyo
tomorrow
tomorrow evening/night	onight
Toronto

total, in júngguhng
fóchē [ga]
dihnhché [ga]
dihnhchéjahm [go]
gäautüng
laahpsaap
máhffāhn
(sājōng)fu [tiuh]
tīsēut [gihn]
sīngkēih-yih,
lāihbaai-yih
yih-sahp, y'ah
yih, léuhng
dá(-jih)
tōihfung [go]
UK, the Yinggwok
jè [bā]
süsuk
hah(mihn)
deihtit
under, beneath
derailway (in Hong Kong, MTR or Mass Transit Railway)
derailway (MTR) station
deihtitjaahm [go]
daaikhohok [gāan]
móuhhaang
ngóhdeih
Meihgwok
tūngsèuhng,
pihngsih

vacuum-clean, to kāp-chàhn
value
tāi [tiuh]
V

Vancouver
tosió [go]
Dūnggīng
tīngyāht

tīngmāahn


gāmmáahn


Dōlēuhndō
W
wait, to
dáng
wait a minute,
dáng yàat
jahn/dáng
fógei [go]
hàahng(-louh)
yiu
séung
(wàn)nyúhn
sái
sái-sāam
sái-díp
sái-wún
tái
tái-dihnyíng, tái-hei
tái-jùkkàuh
tái-dihnsih
séui
sāigwā [go]
ngóhdeih
jeuk
tinhei
sīngkēih-sāam,
láihbaai-sāam
sīngkēih, láihbaai [go]
chihn go láihbaai/
sīngkēih
fūnyínhng
(gwōnglāhm)
sāi
mātyēh, dīmívelng
dīm maaih a
géidimjūng
gēisīh
bǐndouh
bīn(+ classifier/
demonstrative,
e.g. bīn jek, bǐndī)
white
who?
why don’t we …?
wife
will (in predictions)
wind
window
window-
shopping, to go
windy
winter
wish to, to
with
woman
wonder, to
won-ton noodles
wrong number
(on the phone)
Y
year
year, last
year, this
year before last
years of age
yellow
yesterday
yesterday
evening
you (plural)
you (singular)
young
younger brother
younger sister
yourself
yourselves
Z
zero
baahksīk
bingo, bīnwái
bātyūh
taai-táai [go]
wūih
fūng [jahng]
chēung [jek]
hàahng-gāai
daaihfüng, fūngsāi
kēuhnggihng
dūngtīn
séung
tūhng
néuihyán [go]
mī
wāhntānmihn
daap cho sin
nihn
gauhnīn
gāmnīn
chihnnīn
seui
wōhngsīk
chāhmyaht,
kāhmyaht
chāhmmbāahn,
kāhmmbāahn
néihdeih
néih
hauhsāang
dāih-dāi, sailōu [go]
(mūih-)mūi [go]
néih jihgēi
néihdeih jihgēi
lihng
Further reading

Dictionaries


Here are two graphic representations of the contours of the six tones of Cantonese, made using VisiPitch®, a system which displays pitch traces of spoken language.

In Figure 1, the black lines represent the syllable ma, pronounced on each of the six tones, in the traditional Chinese sequence. If you have the audio, you may want to listen to the recorded demonstration.

The first tone (mā) is the high level tone, on a consistent high pitch. The second tone (má) is the high rising tone. Notice the curve, which rises from a fairly low pitch almost to the pitch of the first tone. The third tone (ma) is the mid level tone, the tone of one’s normal voice.

The fourth tone (mâh) is the falling tone, falling from a medium pitch to a lower pitch.
The fifth tone (máh) is the low rising tone, but the rise is far less obvious compared with that of the second tone.

The sixth tone (mah) is the low level tone, which stays more or less at the same pitch. But notice that the difference in pitch between this tone and the third (mid level) tone is smaller than that between the first (high level) tone and the third (mid level).

Note that each of these tones is relative to the other. There is no absolute pitch as, of course, no two people’s voices are identical. The important thing to remember is to differentiate the relative levels and contours of the tones, with particular respect to the “benchmark” third tone, your normal, or neutral, voice level. Provided that each tone is appropriately distinguished in this way, your Cantonese speech will be readily understood.

Figure 2 Reproduced by courtesy of Kay Elemetrics Corp.

Figure 2 displays a representation of the words síngkèih-yāt (Monday) and síngkèih-yaht (Sunday). In both, the first syllable, síng, is pronounced on the first, high level, tone. The second syllable, kèih, is pronounced on the fourth, low falling, tone. The words síngkèih-yāt and síngkèih-yaht are distinguished only by the tone of the third syllable. In síngkèih-yāt, the yāt is pronounced on the first tone (on the same tone as síng, but note that it is much shorter because of the unexploded final consonant -t). In síngkèih-yaht, the yaht is pronounced on the sixth, low level, tone. Again, notice how short the word is. However, despite its shortness, its tone is still significant.
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