

LESSON 1

第一课

Dì yī kè

Greetings

问好

Wèn hǎo



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, you will learn to use Chinese to

- Exchange basic greetings;
- Request a person's last name and full name and provide your own;
- Determine whether someone is a teacher or a student;
- Ascertain someone's nationality.

RELATE AND GET READY

In your own culture/community—

1. How do people greet each other when meeting for the first time?
2. Do people say their given name or family name first?
3. How do acquaintances or close friends address each other?

Dialogue I: Exchanging Greetings



你好^①！



你好！



请问^②，你^③贵姓？



我姓^①李。你呢^②？



我姓王。李小姐^④，
你^③叫什么名字？



我叫李友。王先生，
你叫什么名字？



我叫王朋。

LANGUAGE NOTES

① 你好！(Nǐ hǎo!) is a common form of greeting.

It can be used to address strangers upon first introduction or between old acquaintances. To respond, simply repeat the same greeting.

② 请问(qǐng wèn) is a polite formula to be used to get someone's attention before asking a question or making an inquiry, similar to "excuse me, may I please ask..." in English.

③ You can replace 你(nǐ) with its honorific form, 您(nín), if you wish to be more polite and respectful. See Lesson 6, Dialogue I, Language Note 1.

④ 小姐(xiǎojiě) is a word with two third tone syllables. The tone sandhi rule applies, thus making the first third tone 小(xiǎo) a second tone. The second syllable 姐(jiě) can also be pronounced in the neutral tone.



Nǐ hǎo ①!



Nǐ hǎo !



Qǐng wèn ②, nǐ ③ guì xìng?



Wǒ xìng ① Lǐ. Nǐ ne ②?



Wǒ xìng Wáng. Lǐ xiǎojiě ④, nǐ jiào ③ shénme míngzi?



Wǒ jiào Lǐ Yǒu. Wáng xiānsheng, nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?



Wǒ jiào Wáng Péng.



VOCABULARY

1.	你	nǐ	pr	you
2.	好	hǎo	adj	fine; good; nice; O.K.; it's settled
3.	请	qǐng	v	please (polite form of request); to treat or to invite (somebody)
4.	问	wèn	v	to ask (a question)
5.	贵	guì	adj	honorable; expensive
6.	姓	xìng	v/n	(one's) surname is...; to be surnamed; surname [See Grammar 1.]
7.	我	wǒ	pr	I; me
8.	呢	ne	qp	(question particle) [See Grammar 2.]
9.	小姐	xiǎojiě	n	Miss; young lady
10.	叫	jiào	v	to be called; to call [See Grammar 3.]
11.	什么	shénme	qpr	what



VOCABULARY

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----------|---|-----------------------|
| 12. | 名字 | míngzi | n | name |
| 13. | 先生 | xiānsheng | n | Mr.; husband; teacher |

Proper Nouns

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----------|--|-------------------|
| 14. | 李友 | Lǐ Yǒu | | (a personal name) |
| | 李 | lǐ | | (a surname); plum |
| 15. | 王朋 | Wáng Péng | | (a personal name) |
| | 王 | wáng | | (a surname); king |

Grammar

1. The Verb 姓 (xìng)

姓 (xìng) is both a noun and a transitive verb. When it is used as a verb, it must be followed by an object.

① A: 你姓什么？

Nǐ xìng shénme?

(What is your surname? Lit: You are surnamed what?)

B: 我姓李。

Wǒ xìng Lǐ.

(My surname is Li.)

姓 (xìng) is usually negated with 不 (bù). [See Grammar 6.]

2 A: 你姓李吗?

Nǐ xìng Lǐ ma?

(Is your family name Li?)

B: 我不姓李。

Wǒ bú xìng Lǐ.

(My surname is not Li.)

It is incorrect to say: *我不姓。 *Wǒ bú xìng.

However, when 姓 (xìng) is used with 贵 (guì) to form a respectful or polite expression to ask for someone's surname, the proper way to inquire and to respond is as follows:

3 A: 你贵姓?

Nǐ guì xìng?

(What is your surname?) (Lit: Your honorable surname is...?)

Remember to drop the honorific 贵 when you reply:

B: 我姓王。

Wǒ xìng Wáng.

(My surname is Wang.)

It is incorrect to say: *我贵姓王。 *Wǒ guì xìng Wáng.

One may also hear people respond to 你贵姓 (Nǐ guì xìng) by saying 免贵姓王 (Miǎn guì xìng Wáng), 免贵姓李 (Miǎn guì xìng Lǐ). Lit: Dispense with the honorable. [My] surname is Wang/Li.

2. Questions Ending with 呢 (ne)

呢 (ne) often follows a noun or pronoun to form a question when the content of the question is already clear from the context.

1 A: 请问，你贵姓?

Qǐng wèn, nǐ guì xìng?

(What's your family name, please?)

B: 我姓李，你呢？

Wǒ xìng Lǐ, nǐ ne?

(My family name is Li. How about you?)

② A: 你叫什么名字？

Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?

(What's your name?)

B: 我叫王朋，你呢？

Wǒ jiào Wáng Péng, nǐ ne?

(My name is Wang Peng. How about you?)

When 呢 (ne) is used in this way, there must be some context. In each of the two examples above, the context is provided by the preceding sentence, 我姓李 (Wǒ xìng Lǐ) in (1), and 我叫王朋 (Wǒ jiào Wáng Péng) in (2).

3. The Verb 叫 (jiào)

The verb 叫 (jiào) has several meanings. It means “to be called” in this lesson. Like 姓 (xìng), it must be followed by an object, which can be either a full name or a given name, but seldom a given name that consists only of one syllable.

① A: 你叫什么名字？

Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?

(What is your name?)

B: 我叫王朋。

Wǒ jiào Wáng Péng.

(My name is Wang Peng.)

叫 (jiào) is usually negated with 不 (bù). [See Grammar 6.]

② A: 你叫李生吗？

Nǐ jiào Lǐ Shēng ma?

(Is your name Li Sheng?)

B: 我不叫李生。

Wǒ bú jiào Lǐ Shēng.

(My name is not Li Sheng.)

From the examples above, we can see that the basic word order in a Chinese sentence runs like this:

Subject + Verb + Object

The word order remains the same in statements and questions. Remember that you don't place the question word at the beginning of a question as you do in English, unless that question word is the subject. (See more on word order in Grammar 3 in Lesson 2 and Grammar 1 in Lesson 4.)

Language Practice

A. Mix and mingle

Walk around the classroom and get to know your classmates:

A: 你好！

A: Nǐ hǎo!

B: _____。

B: _____.

A: 请问，你贵姓？

A: Qǐng wèn, nǐ guì xìng?

B: 我姓_____。

B: Wǒ xìng _____.

你呢？

Nǐ ne?

A: 我姓_____，

A: Wǒ xìng _____,

我叫_____，

wǒ jiào _____,

你叫什么名字？

nǐ jiào shénme míngzì?

B: 我叫_____。

B: Wǒ jiào _____.

B. Meeting for the first time/Getting acquainted

Complete the following exchange between two people who have never met before. Do a role play based on the exchange.

A: 你好！

A: Nǐ hǎo!

B: _____。

B: _____.

A: 我姓_____,
请问, 你贵姓?

A: Wǒ xìng _____,
qǐng wèn, nǐ guì xìng?

B: _____。

B: _____.

A: _____,

A: _____,

你叫什么名字?

nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?

B: 我叫_____。

B: Wǒ jiào _____.

Dialogue II: Asking about Someone's Nationality



王先生，你^④是老师^⑤吗？



我^⑥不^①是老师，我是学生。
李友，你呢？



我^⑦也是学生。你是
中国人吗？



是，我是北京人。你是
美国人吗？



是，我是纽约人。

LANGUAGE NOTE

① The original tone of 不 is a 4th tone "bù". However, when followed by another 4th tone syllable, 不 changes to 2nd tone, as in 不是 (bú shì).



Wáng xiānsheng, nǐ shì^④ lǎoshī ma^⑤?



Wǒ bú^⑥ shì lǎoshī, wǒ shì xuésheng. Lǐ Yǒu, nǐ ne?



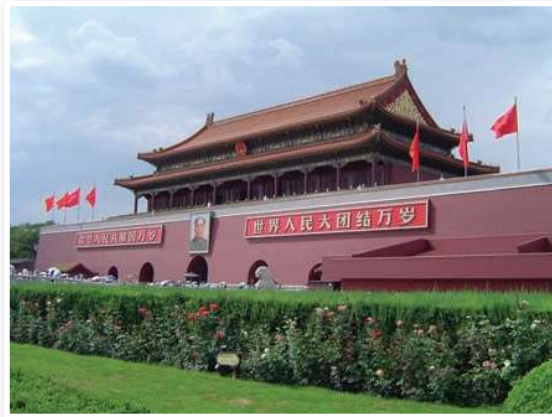
Wǒ yě^⑦ shì xuésheng. Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén ma?



Shì, wǒ shì Běijīng rén. Nǐ shì Měiguó rén ma?



Shì, wǒ shì Niǔyuē rén.



VOCABULARY

- | | | | |
|-------|----------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 1. 是 | shì | v | to be [See Grammar 4.] |
| 2. 老师 | lǎoshī | n | teacher |
| 3. 吗 | ma | qp | (question particle) [See Grammar 5.] |
| 4. 不 | bù | adv | not; no [See Grammar 6.] |
| 5. 学生 | xuésheng | n | student |
| 6. 也 | yě | adv | too; also [See Grammar 7.] |
| 7. 人 | rén | n | people; person |

Proper Nouns

- | | | |
|--------|----------|----------|
| 8. 中国 | Zhōngguó | China |
| 9. 北京 | Běijīng | Beijing |
| 10. 美国 | Měiguó | America |
| 11. 纽约 | Niǔyuē | New York |



Grammar

4. The Verb 是 (shì)

In Chinese, 是 (shì) is a verb which can be used to link two units that are in some way equivalent. These two units can be nouns, pronouns, or noun phrases, e.g.,

① A: 你是老师吗?

Nǐ shì lǎoshī ma?

(Are you a teacher?)

B: 我是老师。

Wǒ shì lǎoshī.

(I am a teacher.)

② 李友是学生。

Lǐ Yǒu shì xuésheng.

(Li You is a student.)

是 (shì) is usually negated with 不 (bù). [See also Grammar 6 below.]

③ 王朋不是美国人。

Wáng Péng bú shì Měiguó rén.

(Wang Peng is not American.)

5. Questions Ending with 吗 (ma)

When 吗 (ma) is added to the end of a declarative statement, that statement is turned into a question. To answer the question in the affirmative, drop the 吗 (ma) from the end of the question; to answer the question in the negative, drop the 吗 (ma), and insert a negative adverb—usually 不 (bù)—before the verb. [See also Grammar 6 below.]

①

Question:

你是老师吗？

Nǐ shì lǎoshī ma?

(Are you a teacher?)

Affirmative answer:

我是老师。

Wǒ shì lǎoshī.

(I am a teacher.)

Negative answer:

我不是老师。

Wǒ bú shì lǎoshī.

(I am not a teacher.)

②

Question:

你姓王吗？

Nǐ xìng Wáng ma?

(Is your family name Wang?)

Affirmative:

我姓王。

Wǒ xìng Wáng.

(My family name is Wang.)

Negative:

我不姓王。

Wǒ bú xìng Wáng.

(My family name is not Wang.)

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This is a typical business card. Circle the person's family name.
Where is this person located?

6. The Negative Adverb 不 (bù)

In Chinese there are two main negative adverbs. One of the two, 不 (bù), occurs in this lesson.

① 我不是北京人。

Wǒ bú shì Běijīng rén.

(I am not from Beijing.)

② 李友不是中国人。

Lǐ Yǒu bú shì Zhōngguó rén.

(Li You is not Chinese.)

③ 老师不姓王。

Lǎoshī bú xìng Wáng.

(The teacher's surname is not Wang.)

④ 我不叫李中。

Wǒ bú jiào Lǐ Zhōng.

(My name is not Li Zhong.)



7. The Adverb 也 (yě)

The adverb 也 (yě) basically means “too” or “also.” In Chinese, adverbs, especially one-syllable adverbs, normally appear after subjects and in front of verbs. They usually cannot precede subjects or follow verbs. The adverb 也 (yě) cannot be put before the subject or at the very end of a sentence.

① 我也是学生。

Wǒ yě shì xuésheng.

(I'm a student, too.)

② 王朋是学生，李友也是学生。

Wáng Péng shì xuésheng, Lǐ Yǒu yě shì xuésheng.

(Wang Peng is a student. Li You is a student, too.)

3 你是中国人，我也是中国人。

Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén, wǒ yě shì Zhōngguó rén.

(You are Chinese. I am Chinese, too.)

(3a) 你是中国人，*我是中国人也。

Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén, *wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén yě.

(3b) 你是中国人，*也我是中国人。

Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén, *yě wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén.

When the adverb 也 (yě) is used together with the negative adverb 不 (bù), 也 (yě) is placed before 不 (bù), e.g.

4 王朋不是老师，李友也不是老师。

Wáng Péng bú shì lǎoshī, Lǐ Yǒu yě bú shì lǎoshī.

(Wang Peng is not a teacher. Li You is not a teacher, either.)

5 你不是纽约人，我也不是纽约人。

Nǐ bú shì Niǔyuē rén, wǒ yě bú shì Niǔyuē rén.

(You are not from New York. I am not from New York, either.)

Language Practice

C. 是...吗 (shì...ma)

Based on the text of Lesson 1 and your own situation, ask and answer the following questions with a partner.

EXAMPLE 王朋◇学生

Wáng Péng ◇ xuésheng

A: 王朋是学生吗?

A: Wáng Péng shì xuésheng ma?

B: 王朋是学生。

B: Wáng Péng shì xuésheng.

1. 李友◇美国人

1. Lǐ Yǒu ◇ Měiguó rén

2. 王朋◇中国人

2. Wáng Péng ◇ Zhōngguó rén

3. 李友 ◇ 美国学生
4. 王朋 ◇ 北京人
5. 李友 ◇ 纽约人
6. 你 ◇ 学生

3. Lǐ Yǒu ◇ Měiguó xuésheng
4. Wáng Péng ◇ Běijīng rén
5. Lǐ Yǒu ◇ Niǔyuē rén
6. Nǐ ◇ xuésheng

D. 不 (bù)

Based on the text of Lesson 1 and your own situation, ask and answer the following questions with a partner.

EXAMPLE

A: 李小姐叫李朋吗？

A: Lǐ xiǎojiě jiào Lǐ Péng ma?

B: 李小姐不叫李朋。

B: Lǐ xiǎojiě bú jiào Lǐ Péng.

1. 李友是中国人吗？

1. Lǐ Yǒu shì Zhōngguó rén ma?

2. 你是王朋吗？

2. Nǐ shì Wáng Péng ma?

3. 王朋是纽约人吗？

3. Wáng Péng shì Niǔyuē rén ma?

4. 王先生叫王友吗？

4. Wáng xiānsheng jiào Wáng Yǒu ma?

5. 你叫李友吗？

5. Nǐ jiào Lǐ Yǒu ma?

E. 也 (yě)

Based on the text of Lesson 1 and your own situation, ask and answer the following questions with a partner.

1. 王朋是中国人，
你也是中国人吗？

1. Wáng Péng shì Zhōngguó rén,
nǐ yě shì Zhōngguó rén ma?

2. 李友是纽约人，
你也是纽约人吗？

2. Lǐ Yǒu shì Niǔyuē rén,
nǐ yě shì Niǔyuē rén ma?

3. 王朋不是老师，你呢？

3. Wáng Péng bú shì lǎoshī, nǐ ne?

4. 李友不是中国人，你呢？

4. Lǐ Yǒu bú shì Zhōngguó rén, nǐ ne?

5. 王朋姓王，

5. Wáng Péng xìng Wáng,

你也姓王吗？

nǐ yě xìng Wáng ma?

F. "I'm American. How about you? Where are you from?"

Walk around the classroom and find out about your classmates' nationality, state, or city origins. Remember that, to say that you are from America, California, or Boston, simply attach the word 人 (rén: person) to the name of the country, state, or city: 我是美国 (Měiguó)/California/Boston 人 (rén).

A: 我是美国人，你呢？

A: Wǒ shì Měiguó rén, nǐ ne?

B: ○

B:

A: 你是 Kentucky (the state of your current residence) 人吗？

A: Nǐ shì Kentucky (the state of your current residence) rén ma?

B: 我是...人。/

B: Wǒ shì ... rén./

我不是...人，我是...人。

Wǒ bú shì... rén, wǒ shì ...rén.

A: 你是 (pick a city in your respondent's home state) 人吗？

A: Nǐ shì (pick a city in your respondent's home state) rén ma?

B: 我是 (Louisville) 人。你呢？

B: Wǒ shì (Louisville) rén, nǐ ne?

A: 我是 (Portland) 人。

A: Wǒ shì (Portland) rén.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Where are you from?

- | | | | |
|---------|----------|----|------------------|
| 1. 英国 | Yīngguó | pn | Britain; England |
| 2. 法国 | Fǎguó | pn | France |
| 3. 德国 | Déguó | pn | Germany |
| 4. 日本 | Rìběn | pn | Japan |
| 5. 韩国 | Hánguó | pn | South Korea |
| 6. 加拿大 | Jiā'nádà | pn | Canada |
| 7. 墨西哥 | Mòxīgē | pn | Mexico |
| 8. 印度 | Yìndù | pn | India |
| 9. 越南 | Yuènnán | pn | Vietnam |
| 10. 加州 | Jiāzhōu | pn | California |
| 11. 夏威夷 | Xiàwēiyí | pn | Hawaii |
| 12. 上海 | Shànghǎi | pn | Shanghai |



If your country/state/city is not listed above, please ask your teacher and make a note here:

我是_____人。

Wǒ shì_____rén.

Culture Highlights

- ① Most Chinese family names 姓 (xìng) are monosyllabic. There are, however, a few disyllabic family names such as 欧阳 (Ōuyáng) and 司徒 (Sītú). The number of Chinese family names is fairly limited. According to the most recent census, the most common family names are 李 (Lǐ), 王 (Wáng), 张 (Zhāng), 刘 (Liú), and 陈 (Chén). Family names precede official titles or other forms of address: 王先生 (Wáng xiānsheng, literally, Wang Mister), 李老师 (Lǐ lǎoshī, literally, Li Teacher), etc. When addressing strangers, it is proper to say 先生 (xiānsheng, Mr.) or 小姐 (xiǎojiě, Miss) following their family name.

- ② Family names 姓 (xìng) are sometimes called 姓氏 (xìngshì). 姓 (xìng) were originally passed down along maternal lines. Indeed, some of the most ancient Chinese family names such as 姬 (Jī), 姁 (Guī), 姒 (Sì), 姚 (Yáo), and 姜 (Jiāng) as well as the character 姓 (xìng) contain the female radical, 女 (nǚ). Aristocratic men and women were born with a 姓 (xìng). However, only aristocratic men would have a 氏 (shì) as a secondary family name. By the Western Han period (207 BCE–8 CE), 姓 (xìng) and 氏 (shì) had become indistinguishable, and even commoners had acquired family names or 姓 (xìng).

- ③ When talking about Chinese family names, most Chinese people will reference or mention the *Hundred Surnames*, 百家姓 (Bǎi Jiā Xìng). The book records the known family names of the Northern Song Dynasty in the 10th century. The 400-plus family names included in the work are arranged in quatrains with each eighth character rhymed. The book was a popular reading primer recited by schoolchildren.

赵 钱 孙 李
周 吴 郑 王
冯 陈 褚 卫
蒋 沈 韩 杨

These are the first sixteen surnames listed in the *Hundred Surnames*. Do you recognize any of them?

百家姓辭典

There are dictionaries to interpret the *Hundred Surnames*. This is the cover of one of those dictionaries.

- 
- ④ In Chinese, family names 姓 (xìng) always precede personal or given names 名 (míng). Personal names usually carry auspicious or positive meanings. They can be either monosyllabic, written in one character, or disyllabic, written in two characters. In Chinese culture, a person is seldom referred to by his or her family name alone, especially if the family name is monosyllabic. For example, Wang Peng 王朋 (Wáng Péng), should not be referred to simply as Wang.
- ⑤ When meeting someone for the first time, it is polite to first ask for his or her family name, rather than his/her full name. Then the question 你叫什么名字? (Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? What is your name?) can be asked to find out his or her given name or full name.
- ⑥ In Chinese culture the use of given names often suggests a much higher degree of intimacy than is the case in the West. If one's given name is monosyllabic, its use is even more limited, usually confined to one's lover or spouse. For example, Wang Peng's girlfriend can address him as Peng, especially in letters, but most people would call him Wang Peng rather than Peng.

Do you know any people with these family names?

毕 (Bì); 蔡 (Cài); 陈 (Chén); 高 (Gāo); 黄 (Huáng); 李 (Lǐ);
林 (Lín); 刘 (Liú); 罗 (Luó); 毛 (Máo); 史 (Shǐ); 王 (Wáng);
吴 (Wú); 谢 (Xiè); 徐 (Xú); 许 (Xǔ); 杨 (Yáng); 姚 (Yáo); 叶 (Yè);
张 (Zhāng); 郑 (Zhèng); 周 (Zhōu)

Pronunciation Exercises



1 Practice the following initials:

	b	p	d	t
1.	bǎo	pǎo	dǎ	tǎ
2.	bān	pān	dí	tí
3.	bù	pù	duì	tuì
4.	bō	pō	dīng	tīng
5.	bēng	pēng	dēng	tēng

2 Practice the following initials:

	j	q	z	c
1.	jiāo	qiāo	zāi	cāi
2.	jǐng	qǐng	zǎo	cǎo
3.	jīn	qīn	zì	cì
4.	jiè	qiè	zè	cè
5.	jiàn	qiàn	zhè	chè

3 Practice the following initials:

	sh	s	x
1.	shà	sà	xià
2.	shàn	sàn	xiàn
3.	shēn	sēn	xīn
4.	shēng	sēng	xīng

4 Practice the following tones:

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1. tiāntiān | 2. jīnnián | 3. jīnglǐ | 4. shēngqì |
| 5. xīngqī | 6. fādá | 7. fāzhǎn | 8. shēngdiào |

5 Practice the following tone combinations:

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 1. nǐ hǎo | 2. Lǐ Yǒu | 3. lǎohǔ | 4. zhǎnlǎn |
| 5. hǎo duō | 6. nǐ lái | 7. hǎo shū | 8. qǐng wèn |

6 Practice the following syllables in neutral tones:

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. xiānsheng | 2. míngzi | 3. xiáojie | 4. shénme |
| 5. wǒ de | 6. nǐ de | 7. tā de | 8. shéi de |

English Text

Dialogue I

Wang Peng: How do you do?

Li You: How do you do?

Wang Peng: What's your family name, please? (lit. Please, may I ask... your honorable surname is...?)

Li You: My family name is Li. What's yours? (lit. I am surnamed Li, and you?)

Wang Peng: My family name is Wang. Miss Li, what's your name?

Li You: My name is Li You. Mr. Wang, what's your name?

Wang Peng: My name is Wang Peng.

Dialogue II

Li You: Mr. Wang, are you a teacher?

Wang Peng: I'm not a teacher, I'm a student. Li You, how about you?

Li You: I'm a student, too. Are you Chinese?

Wang Peng: Yes, I'm from Beijing (lit. I'm a Beijing-er). Are you American?

Li You: Yes, I'm from New York (lit. I'm a New Yorker).

PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Before proceeding to Lesson 2, be sure that you can complete the following tasks in Chinese:

I am able to

- ☒ Exchange basic greetings;
- ☒ Say my last name and full name;
- ☒ Ask someone's last name and full name;
- ☒ Say if I am a student or not;
- ☒ State my nationality;
- ☒ Ask someone's nationality.

Please review the lesson if any of these tasks seem difficult.