



## Absolute Beginner S1

Lightning Fast Cantonese Language Proficiency

19

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## Traditional Chinese

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你廣東話講得好好哦!  
邊度係啊!  
你學咗幾耐?  
兩個鐘頭。

## Jyutping

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nei5 gwong2 dung1 waa2 gong2 dak1 hou2 hou2 ngo4 !  
bin1 dou6 hai6 aa3 !  
nei5 hok6 zo2 gei2 loi6 ?  
loeng5 go3 zung1 tau4.

## English

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Your Cantonese is really good.  
No, it isn't.  
How long have you been learning?  
Two hours.

## Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
廣東話	gwong2 dung1 waa2	Cantonese language
咗	zo2	-ed (past tense suffix)
邊度	bin1 dou6	where
呢度	ni1 dok6	here
嗰度	go2 dou6	there
幾耐	gei2 noi6	how long
鐘頭	zung1 tau4	hour

## Vocabulary Sample Sentences

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我識講廣東話。	ngo5 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2。	I (know how to) speak Cantonese.
你識唔識講廣東話？	nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2 ?	Do you (know how to) speak Cantonese?
去咗邊度？	heoi3 zo2 bin1 dou6?	Where did (you) go?
去咗邊度？	heoi3 zo2 bin1 dou6?	Where did (you) go?
呢度啲嘢好好食。	ni1 dou6 di1 je5 hou2 hou2 sik6。	Food here is delicious.
嗰度好靚。	go2 dou6 hou2 leng3。	It's beautiful over there.
幾耐到？	gei2 noi6 dou3 ?	How long (does it take) to get there?
兩個鐘頭。	loeng5 go3 zung1 tau4。	Two hours.

## Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is the Past Tense Suffix 咗 (zo2)

你學咗幾耐？

nei5 hok6 zo2 gei2 loi6

"How long have you been learning?"

In Cantonese, we don't conjugate verbs as in English. Rather, we place a specific character after a verb to show that the action took place in the past.

To indicate that you have already done an action, simply use this formula: verb + 咗 = past tense

For Example:

1. 學咗  
hok6 zo2  
"studied"
2. 食咗  
sik6 zo2  
"ate"
3. 飲咗  
jam2 zo2  
"drank"
4. 做咗  
zou6 zo2  
"did"
5. 走咗

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zau2 zo2

"left"

6. 嚟咗

lai4 zo2

"came"

Complete sentences using the past tense marker 咗:

1. 我食咗。

ngo5 sik6 zo2

"I ate."

2. 佢走咗。

keoi5 zau2 zo2

"He left."

3. 佢嚟咗。

keoi5 lai4 zo2

"He came."

4. 我飲咗水。

ngo5 jam2 zo2 sei2

"I drank some water."

5. 你哋做咗咩？

nei5 dei6 zou6 zo2 me1

"What did you guys do?"

6. 你學咗幾耐？

nei5 hok6 zo2 gei2 loi6

"How long have you been studying?"

7. 我學咗兩個鐘頭。

ngo5 hok6 zo2 loeng5 go3 zung1 tau4

"I've studied for two hours."

## Cultural Insight

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### Learning Cantonese

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Language learning opportunities are in the eye of the beholder. Unlike many languages, Cantonese is unique in the fact that a large population of native Cantonese speakers exist all around the world due to immigration. Throughout Europe, the United States, and Canada, China towns and small Chinese communities alike exist. Walk into any Chinese takeout restaurant and you will likely find a Cantonese speaker. If not a Cantonese speaker, at least someone who can help you with your Chinese characters.

Cantonese is blessed with a plethora of movies, songs, and television shows in Cantonese. You can practice natural, native-level Cantonese in the comfort of your own home on your computer. Spending time studying Chinese history and culture will give you topics to discuss with your language partner.

If you happen to live in Hong Kong or Guangdong, every day is a language lesson. Interacting with locals and repeated speaking practice is a fast track to better fluency.