



## Absolute Beginner S1

### What's in a Cantonese Name?

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## Traditional Chinese

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你好。  
你好。  
我叫偉仔，你呢？  
我叫嘉玲。

## Jyutping

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nei5 hou2。  
nei5 hou2。  
ngo5 giu3 wai5 zai2 , nei5 ne1 ?  
ngo5 giu3 gaa1 ling4.

## English

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Hello.  
Hello.  
I'm Tony Leung. And you?  
I'm Carina Lau.

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## Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
你好	nei5 hou2	hello
我	ngo5	I
叫	giu3	to be called; call
你	nei5	you
你呢	nei5 ni1	and you
好	hou2	very
嘉玲	gaa1 ling4	Carina Lau
偉仔	wai5 zai2	Tony Leung

## Vocabulary Sample Sentences

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人們在說你好。	jan4 mun4 zoi6 syut3 nei5 hou2。	The people are saying, "Hello."
我叫Nicole。	ngo5 giu3 Nicole。	I'm (called) Nicole.
我叫Nicole。	ngo5 giu3 Nicole。	I'm (called) Nicole.
你叫咩名？	nei5 giu3 me1 meng2 ?	What's your name?
你最近點啊？	nei5 zeoi3 gan6 dim2 aa3 ?	How have you been lately?
我最近好好，你呢？	ngo5 zeoi3 gan6 hou2 hou2 , nei5 ne1 ?	I've been really good lately, and you?
今日好開心啊！	gam1 jat6 hou2 hoi1 sam1 aa3 !	Today (I'm) very happy!
我唔鍾意嘉玲。	ngo5 m4 zung1 ji3 gaa1 ling4。	I don't like Carina.
我鍾意偉仔。	ngo5 zung1 ji3 wai5 zai2。	I like Tony Leung.

## Vocabulary Phrase Usage

你好 (nei5 ho2) means "hello" in Cantonese and is made up of two words: 你 (nei5) meaning "you" and 好 (hou2) meaning "good." Between friends, you can replace the 你好 with 嗨 (haai1), which literally means "hi," and it sounds just like it. 叫 (giu3) is literally the verb for "to call." So, as in the case of our dialogue, when you are saying "My name is \_\_\_\_\_," in Chinese, actually you are saying "I'm called \_\_\_\_\_."

## Grammar Points

**The Focus of This Lesson is Introducing Yourself and Asking Other's Names.**

我叫偉仔，你呢？

ngo5 giu3 wai5 zai2, nei5 ne1?

"I'm Tony Leung. And you?"

The way to introduce yourself in Cantonese is very similar to English. In this case, we follow a simple pattern:

我叫 (ngo5 giu3) - "I'm called" + (name)

The sentence follows the subject (我) + verb (叫) + object (name) sentence structure, which is standard for Cantonese.

For Example:

1. 我叫Nicole。

ngo5 giu3 Nicole

"I'm Nicole."

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2. 我叫Matt。  
ngo5 giu3 Matt  
"I'm Matt."

你呢 (nei5 ne1) "and you?"

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We can use 你呢 (nei5 ne1) on any occasion where you want to ask for the other person's information or opinion. It is normal to first say something about yourself before you ask someone else 你呢.

## Cultural Insight

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### What is Your Name?

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When dealing with names in Cantonese, there are two ground rules you want to follow. In the Chinese naming system, the given name is placed after the surname. Imagine your name in English. To turn your name into a Cantonese name, just put your family name first, and your first name, last. So for instance, Paul Johnson would now be Johnson Paul. For a Cantonese example, Tony Leung would be 梁朝偉, (loeng4 ciu4 wai5) - Literally, Leung Tony.

A second guideline is that it is more polite in Cantonese to introduce your name before asking others theirs. It is very common to simply ask for the family name of someone who is older than you as a sign of respect. For example, 你貴姓? (nei5 gwai3 seng3?) - "What is your family name?"