



Absolute Beginner S1

Effortless Cantonese

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Traditional Chinese

我學緊廣東話。
係咩？
你可唔可以同我講廣東話？
冇問題。

Jyutping

ngo5 hok6 gan2 gwong2 dung1 waa2。
hai6 me1 ?
nei5 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 tung4 ngo5 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2 ?
mou5 man6 tai4 。

English

I'm learning Cantonese.
Really?
Can you talk to me in Cantonese?
No problem.

Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
學	hok6	to learn
溫書	wan1 syu1	to study
緊	gan2	-ing
廣東話	gwong2 dung1 waa2	Cantonese language
英文	jing1 man2	English
係咩	hai6 me1	Really
國語	gwok3 jyu5	Mandarin
講	gong2	to speak
傾	king1	to talk

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

我學過跳舞。	ngo5 hok6 gwo3 tiu3 mou5。	I've learned dancing.
我溫緊書。	ngo5 wan1 gan2 syu1。	I'm studying.
我溫緊書。	ngo5 wan1 gan2 syu1。	I'm studying.
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?
你識唔識英文？	nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 jing1 man2 ?	Do you speak English?
係咩？	hai6 me1?	really?
我識講國語。	ngo5 sik1 gong2 gwok3 jyu5。	I can speak Mandarin.
唔該講多次。	m4 goi1 gong2 do1 ci3。	Can you repeat that please?
你識唔識講廣東話？	nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2?	Do you speak Cantonese?
下次再傾。	haa6 ci3 zoi3 king1。	Talk to you next time!

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is the Present Continuous Tense Suffix 緊 (gan2)

我學緊廣東話。

ngo5 hok6 gan2 gwong2 dung1 waa2

"I'm learning Cantonese."

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

To indicate that you are doing an action, simply use this formula: verb + 緊 = present continuous tense

For Example:

1. 學緊

hok6 gan2

"learning"

2. 食緊

sik6 gan2

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- "eating"
3. 飲緊
jam2 gan2
"drinking"
4. 做緊
zou6 gan2
"doing"
5. 行緊
haang4 gan2
"walking"
6. 嚟緊
lai4 gan2
"coming"

Complete sentences using the present continuous tense marker 緊:

1. 我食緊。
ngo5 sik6 gan2
"I'm eating."
2. 佢嚟緊。
keoi5 lai4 gan2
"He is coming."
3. 我飲緊。
ngo5 jam2 gan2
"I'm drinking."
4. 你哋做緊咩?
nei5 dei4 zou6 gan2 me1
"What are you guys doing?"
5. 你學緊咩?
nei5 hok6 gan2 me1
"What are you learning?"
6. 我學緊廣東話。
ngo5 hok6 gan2 gwong2 dung1 waa2
"I'm learning Cantonese."

Cultural Insight

Speaking Cantonese with Locals

Living in a Cantonese-speaking area is a great resource to learn the language. Everyone around you is a language teacher! One of the things you may find, however, is that the language taught in a traditional textbook is a world away from how casual native speakers talk with one another. Eavesdropping on a conversation can be like solving a puzzle: trying to pick out the words you already know, while trying to construct an idea of what the entire conversation is about.

Interaction is key, and you will find people from every walk of life literally walking down the street. Most Cantonese people are very eager to engage in a conversation with a non-native speaker but remember: a) you will probably sound funny to them, and b) they have probably had few if any chances to interact with a "westerner."

Spend some time hanging around a street game of Chinese checkers or chatting with your cab driver. You'll find your spoken Cantonese and listening comprehension improving dramatically. Don't confine it just to your language partner in safe territory. Remember to push the boundaries.