



## Absolute Beginner S1 Help From the Cantonese Staff

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## Traditional Chinese

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小姐！  
有咩可以幫到你？  
埋單，唔該。  
好。

## Jyutping

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siu2 ze2 !  
jau5 me1 ho2 ji5 bong1 dou2 nei5?  
maai4 daan1, m4 goi1。  
hou2。

## English

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Miss!  
Is there anything I can help you with?  
Bill please.  
Okay.

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## Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
咩	me1	what
可以	ho2 ji5	can; to allow
幫	bong1	to help
有咩	jau5 me1	Is there anything...
睇	tai2	to watch/see
做	zou6	to do; to work
埋單	maai4 daan1	to check the bill

## Vocabulary Sample Sentences

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你叫咩名？ 我哋可以一齊去。	nei5 giu3 me1 meng2 ? ngo5 dei6 ho2 ji5 jat1 cai4 heoi3。	What's your name? We can go together.
唔該幫下我。 有咩問題？	m4 goi1 bong1 haa5 ngo5。 jau5 me1 man6 tai4?	Please help me. Is there any problem? /What's the problem?
不如睇戲？ 最近好多嘢做。	bat1 jyu4 tai2 hei3? zeoi3 gan6 hou2 do1 je5 zou6。	How about (we) see a movie? (There's) a lot of stuff to do lately.
我嚟埋單。	ngo5 lai4 maai4 daan1。	Let me pick up the tab.

## Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Asking Questions Using 有咩 (jau5 me1)

有咩可以幫到你？

jau5 me1 ho2 ji5 bong1 dou2 nei5 ?

"Is there anything I can help you with?"

In this lesson, we will focus on two ways of asking questions in Cantonese. The first is by using the combination of 有咩 (jau5 me1) and 可以 (ho2 ji5). This functions as "Is there any..." and then the object you are asking about.

Formula: 有咩可以 + object + 啊

For Example:

1. 有咩可以食啊？  
jau5 me1 ho2 ji5 sik6 aa3  
"Is there anything to eat?"
2. 有咩可以飲啊？  
jau5 me1 ho2 ji5 jam2 aa3  
"Is there anything to drink?"
3. 有咩可以買啊？  
jau5 me1 ho2 ji5 maai5 aa3  
"Is there anything to buy?"

Another way of asking a question in Cantonese is by using 可以. In Cantonese, an easy way to ask a question is by reduplicating the verb. In this case, we use 可唔可以 to ask "can" or "cannot?" Notice we are using the negation 唔.

For Example:

1. 你可唔可以幫我？

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nei5 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 bong1 ngo5

"Can you help me?"

2. 我哋可唔可以食嘢?

ngo5 dei6 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 sik6 je5

"Can we eat?"

3. 我哋可唔可以飲嘢?

ngo5 dei6 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 jam2 je5

"Can we drink?"

4. 我哋可唔可以埋單?

ngo5 dei6 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 maai4 daan1

"Can we get the bill?"

## Cultural Insight

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### Customer Service in Hong Kong

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One of the benefits that Hong Kong received under British rule was a stronger appreciation and aptitude for customer service. This is something that distinguishes the territory from its mainland brethren. Overall, the level of customer service in Hong Kong's hospitality sector is quite good. This can be attributed in some small part to the fact that Hong Kong operates on a tipping basis. But good service comes at a price. Often times in restaurants, an involuntary service charge of fifteen percent will be applied to the total cost of the bill.