



Absolute Beginner S2

Telecom in Hong Kong

20

Traditional	2
Jyutping	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3

Traditional Chinese

點解唔接我電話？
冇信號。
點解冇信號？
過緊海底隧道。

Jyutping

dim2 gaai2 m4 zip3 ngo5 din6 waa2 ?
mou5 seon3 hou4 。
dim2 gaai2 mou5 seon3 hou4 ?
gwo3 gan2 hoi2 dai2 sei6 dou6 。

English

A Why didn't you pick up my call?
B There was no signal.
A Why wasn't there any signal?
B I was going through the Cross Harbor Tunnel.

Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
點解	dim2 gaai2	why
接	zip3	to answer (the phone)
信號	seon3 hou6	signal
過	gwo3	to go through
隧道	sei6 dou6	tunnel
海底隧道	hoi2 dai2 sei6 dou6	Cross Harbour Tunnel
紅磡隧道	hung4 ham3 sei6 dou6	Hung Hum Tunnel

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

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點解你唔嚟？ 唔該接電話。 呢度冇信號。 過馬路要小心。	dim2 gaai2 nei5 m4 lai4? m4 goi1 zip3 din6 waa2。 ni1 dou6 mou5 seon3 hou6。 gwo3 maa5 lou6 jiu3 siu2 sam1。	Why don't you come? Please pick up the phone. There's no signal here. Be careful when you cross the street.
香港好多隧道。	hoeng1 gong2 hou2 do1 sei6 dou6。	There are many tunnels in Hongkong.
海底隧道好長。	hoi2 dai2 sei6 dou6 hou2 coeng4。	The Cross Harbour Tunnel is really long.
海底隧道又叫紅磡隧道。	hoi2 dai2 sei6 dou6 jau6 giu3 hung4 ham3 sei6 dou6 。	The Cross Harbour Tunnel is also called the Hung Hum Tunnel.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is the Difference between the Present Tense and the Past Tense When You're Negating

點解唔接我電話？

dim2 gaai2 m4 zip3 ngo5 din6 waa2 ?

"Why didn't you answer my call?"

In the dialogue we heard 點解唔接我電話, which we translated as "Why didn't you answer my call?" based on the context. But it's actually more close to "Why aren't you answering my call?" The pattern 唔 + verb is negating something in a present tense, or is describing a negative action as a habit or a phenomenon, or that a certain action is against someone's will so they won't do it, while 冇 + verb is negating something in the past tense that something wasn't done.

唔 + verb = "do not do."

冇 + verb = "did not do /have not done."

Sample Sentences

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Cantonese	Romanization	English Translation
我唔去。	ngo5 m4 heoi3 。	"I don't/won't go."
我有去。	ngo5 mou5 heoi3 。	"I didn't go."
佢哋唔食飯。	keoi5 dei6 m4 sik6 faan6 。	"They don't/won't eat."
佢哋冇食飯。	keoi5 dei6 mou5 sik6 faan6 。	"They didn't eat."
唔過隧道。	m4 gwo3 sei6 dou6 。	"(I/We/You...) don't/won't cross the tunnel."
冇過隧道。	mou5 gwo3 sei6 dou6 。	"(I/We/You...) didn't cross the tunnel."

Examples from This Lesson

1. 點解唔接我電話？
dim2 gaai2 m4 zip3 ngo5 din6 waa2 ?
"Why didn't you answer my call?"