



## Beginner S1

### Asking for Directions in Cantonese

12

Traditional	2
Jyutping	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3
Cultural Insight	4

## Traditional Chinese

邊度有銀行？  
前面直行，然後轉左。  
行幾耐？  
十分鐘到。

## Jyutping

Bin1 dou6 jau5 ngan4 hong4?  
Cin4 min6 zik6 haang4, jin4 hau6 zyun3 zo2.  
Haang4 gei2 noi6?  
Sap6 fan1 zung1 dou2.

## English

Where is the bank?  
Go straight, then turn left.  
How long is the walk?  
About ten minutes.

## Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
銀行	ngan4 hong4	bank
邊度	bin1 dou6	where
直行	zik6 haang4	to go straight
轉	zyun2	to turn
前	cin4	front
後	hau6	back
左	zo2	left
右	jau6	right

## Vocabulary Sample Sentences

一個劫匪為咗打劫銀行，射殺 jat1 go3 gip3 fei2 wai4 zo2 A robber robbed the bank, and

# CantoneseClass101.com

Learn Cantonese with **FREE** Podcasts

咗好多無辜嘅群眾。	daa2 gip3 ngan4 hong4, se6 saat3 zo2 hou2 do1 mou4 gu1 gei3 kwan4 zung3。	shot dead many innocent bystanders.
去咗邊度? 向前直行大概一百米。	heoi3 zo2 bin1 dou6? Hoeng3 cin4 zik6 haang4 daai6 koi3 jat1 baak3 mai5 ,	Where did (you) go? Walk straight for about one meter.
當佢每次轉身，我都會心跳加 速。	dong1 keoi5 mui5 ci3 zyun3 san1 , ngo5 dou1 wui5 sam1 tiu3 gaa1 cuk1。	Every time she turns around, my heart rate raises.
喺前面街口轉右。	hai2 cin4 min6 gaai1 hau2 zyun3 jau6。	Turn right at the next corner.
飯後唔好即刻運動。	faan6 hau6 m4 hou2 zik1 hak1 wan6 dung6。	Do not exercise directly after a meal.
就喺左邊。 紅綠燈轉右。	zau6 hai2 zo2 bin1。 hung4 luk6 dang1 zyun3 jau6。	It's right on the left. Turn right at the stop light.

## Grammar Points

### Giving Directions in Cantonese

前面直行，然後轉左。

"First go straight, then turn left."

Our grammar focus today is learning how to chain directions together in Cantonese. This involves using the words 首先 (sau2 sin1) for "first" and 然後 (jin4 hau6) for "then" and chaining them together in sequence. The exact pattern is identical to the way we use it in English, and as with English, there is no limit how to many instances of 然後 you can use in a sentence. Consider the following examples:

1. 首先去銀行，然後買飲品。

Sau2 sin1 heoi3 ngan4 hong4, jin4 hau6 maai5 jam2 ban2.

First go to the bank, then buy a drink.

2. 首先睇戲，然後飲嘢。

Sau2 sin1 tai2 hei3, jin4 hau6 jam2 je5.

First a movie, then a bar.

3. 首先直行，然後轉左。

Sau2 sin1 zik6 haang4, jin4 hau6 zyun3 zo2.

irst go straight, then turn left.

# CantoneseClass101.com

Learn Cantonese with **FREE** Podcasts

4. 首先轉左，然後轉右。

Sau2 sin1 zyun3 zo2, jin4 hau6 zyun3 jau6.

First turn left, then turn right.

5. 首先轉左，然後轉右，然後直行，然後再轉左。

Sau2 sin1 zyun3 zo2, jin4 hau6 zyun3 jau6, jin4 hau6 zik6 haang4, jin4 hau6 zoi3 zyun3 zo2.

First turn left, then turn right, then go straight, then turn left again.

If you're spending a lot of time in more casual situations, it's worth remembering that 首先 (sau2 sin1) is a relatively formal word, so in colloquial Cantonese speakers will often abbreviate it to 先 instead. A more casual way of saying the sentence in our dialogue would thus be 先轉左，然後轉右 sin1 zyun3 zo2, jin4 hau6 zyun3 jau6 ("first turn left, then turn right"). Equally, a colloquial alternative to 然後 is the word 再 (zoi3), which means "again" or "later" as in the phrase 再見 zoi3 gin3 ("goodbye" or "see you later"). This gives us three general patterns which are interchangeable:

1. 首先 ... 然後 ...
2. 先 ... 然後 ...
3. 先 / 首先 ... 再 ...

## Language Tip

---

What if you have a final options? If you want to stress a final action which should be taken, add 最後 (zeoi3 hau6) to the end of your sentence, followed by the last piece of information.

4

## Cultural Insight

---

People in Hong Kong are really tremendously polite. So don't worry that much if you don't understand the directions someone gives you the first time around. What you should be concerned about is that if you don't understand after several efforts, you might have someone go out of their way to physically show you how to get somewhere, even going so far as to "force" you to follow their advice and take the minibus when you really want to take the subway.