

# CantoneseClass101

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## Beginner S1

Leaving Hong Kong

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## Traditional Chinese

- A 佢聽日飛啊？  
B 係啫，唔知啊。  
A 飛邊度啊？  
B 我估泰國啫。

## Jyutping

- A Keoi5 ting1 jat6 fei1 aa4  
B Hai6 gwaa3, m4 zi1 aa3  
A Fei1 bin1 dou6 aa3  
B Ngo5 gu2 taai3 gwok3 gwaa3

## English

- A Is he flying tomorrow?  
B Maybe, I don't know.  
A Where is he flying to?  
B I guess maybe Thailand ?

## Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
聽日	ting1 jit6	tomorrow
今日	gam1 jat6	today
尋日	cam4 jat6	yesterday
飛	fei1	to fly
唔知	m4 zi1	not to know
邊度	bin1 dou6	where
估	gu2	to guess
泰國	taai3 gwok3	Thailand

## Vocabulary Sample Sentences

今日唔知聽日事。 Gam1 jat6 m4 zi1 teng1 jat6 (We) don't know what will

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我今日見到你。	si6. ngo5 gam1 jat6 gin3 dou2 nei5.	happen tomorrow in today. I saw you today.
你尋日去咗邊？ 後日飛香港。	nei5 cam4 jit6 heoi3 zo2 bin1? Hau6 jat6 fei1 hoeng1 gong2.	Where did you go yesterday? (I'm) flying to Hong Kong the day after tomorrow.
我唔知你喺度。 邊度有廁所？ 唔好博估。 泰國好玩。	ngo5 m4 zi1 nei5 hai2 do6. bin1 dou6 jau5 ci3 so2 ? M4 hou2 bok3 gu2. Taa3 gwok3 hou2 waan2.	I didn't know you were here. Where is the washroom? Don't rely on guessing. Thailand is fun.

## Grammar Points

The Focus of this Lesson is How to Guess When You're Uncertain

我估泰國啫

"I guess maybe Thailand?"

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In this grammar section, we discuss the sentence pattern 估 ... 啫, which is used to make educated guesses about something you don't really know. To use this construction simply add the verb 估 after your subject, follow this with your guess, and then end the sentence with 啫. This will be understood as an uncertain guess, something we hear in our dialogue in the sentence 我估泰國啫 ("I guess maybe Thailand").

The verb 估 literally means to guess, but as you hear in our dialogue, the real emotional power in this construction comes from adding the final particle 啫 (gwaa3) to the end of the sentence. In colloquial Cantonese, this 啫 (gwaa3) sound is enough to suggest a guess. It is so powerful it can be used out of context, without the trappings of a surrounding sentence, as in the following examples:

1. 泰國啫。  
Taa3 gwok3 gwaa3.  
"Thailand, maybe."
2. 係啫。  
Hai6 gwaa3.  
"Maybe."
3. 唔係啫。  
M4 hai6 gwaa3.  
"Maybe not."

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When speaking more formally, be sure to use the complete construction, as in these sentences. As with many constructions like this, note that the subject of the middle clause (what you are guessing about) can be omitted if it is clear who or what you are talking about:

1. 我估中國啲。  
Ngo5 gu2 zung1 gwok3 gwaa3.  
"Wishing you happiness."
2. 我估佢會去啲。  
Ngo5 gu2 keoi5 wui5 heoi3 gwaa.  
"I guess he might go."
3. 我估佢會嚟啲。  
Ngo5 gu2 keoi5 wui5 lai4 gwaa.  
"I guess he might come."
4. 我估佢可能係機師啲。  
Ngo5 gu2 keoi5 ho2 nang4 hai6 gei1 si1 gwaa3.  
"I guess he might be a pilot."

## Bonus Point

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估唔到 (gu2 m4 dou2) literally means "I cannot guess," or "I guessed, but I did not get it right." You can use this phrase when asked to take a guess 估下 (gu2 haa5) "take a guess" but honestly have no idea what the answer might be. Another way to use it is if you are really surprised on learning something, in which case you can say 真係估唔到 (zan1 hai6 gu2 m4 dou2) "I wouldn't have thought..." or "I didn't see that coming."

## Cultural Insight

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### A Weekend in Thailand

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Hong Kong people love to travel to Thailand for several reasons. The first is obviously that Thailand has beautiful beaches and palaces. The fact that it is so convenient to get to Thailand from Hong Kong has also made the country the default vacation getaway, especially over the weekend. From Hong Kong, there are more than 20 flights to three major cities in Thailand every single day, and the flights only take around 2 hours and 20 minutes. Ticket prices are also relatively cheap, with return fares running around 1200 HKD.