



## Introduction

First Impressions: Wow Your Cantonese Friends!

2

Traditional	2
Jyutping	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3
Cultural Insight	6

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## Traditional Chinese

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你好。  
你好。你叫咩名？  
我叫成龍。  
好高興認識你。

## Jyutping

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nei5 hou2.  
nei5 hou2. nei5 giu3 mel meng2 ?  
ngo5 giu3 sing4 lung4.  
hou2 goul hing3 jing6 sik1 nei5.

## English

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Hello.  
Hello. What is your name?  
I'm Jacky Chan.  
Nice to meet you.

## Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
你	nei5	you
你好	nei5 hou2	hello
我	ngo5	I
叫	giu3	to call
咩	mel	what
名	meng2	name
好	hou2	very
高興	goul hing3	happy
認識	jing6 sik1	to know, to recognize

## Vocabulary Sample Sentences

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你最近點啊? 人們在說你好。	nei5 zeoi3 gan6 dim2 aa3? jan4 mun4 zoi6 syut3 nei5 hou2.	How have you been lately? The people are saying, "Hello."
我叫Nicole。 我叫Nicole。	ngo5 giu3 Nicole. ngo5 giu3 Nicole.	I'm (called) Nicole. I'm (called) Nicole.
你叫咩名? 你有冇英文名?	nei5 giu3 mel meng2? nei5 jau5 mou5 jing1 man4 meng2?	What's your name? Do you have an English name?
今日好開心啊!	gam1 jat6 hou2 hoil sam1 aa3!	Today (I'm) very happy!
佢老公唔高興。	keoi5 lou5 gung1 m4 gou1 hing3.	Her husband's not happy.
認識你好高興。	jing6 sik1 nei5 hou2 gou1 hing3.	Nice meeting you.

## Grammar Points

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### What's Going On?

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The grammar point is often the focus of each lesson. Most lessons build upon each other, and understanding the structure of a language is one of the fastest ways to acquire a language. We don't just throw grammar terms at you and tell you to write sentences. We take a practical approach to explaining the grammar, and we use normal English to explain how the grammar works and how to use it. Our goal is for you to learn Cantonese in a fun and easy way.

**The Focus of This Lesson is Greeting Someone and Introducing Oneself.**

你叫咩名?

nei5 giu3 mel meng2?

"What is your name?"

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Names in Cantonese

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Cantonese names, like all Chinese names, are made up of two parts. The surname, which comes first and consists of one character, then the given name, which can be either a single character or a compound of two characters. Thus, when we read Cantonese names, we always read them last name first.

Some famous Chinese people and their names in Chinese:

1. 毛澤東  
mou4 zaak6 dung1  
"Mao Tse-tung"
2. 劉德華  
lau4 dak1 waa4  
"Andy Lau"

The less formal way of asking someone's name in Chinese is:

1. 你叫咩名?  
nei5 giu3 mel meng2 ?  
"What is your name?"

This sentence, translated literally, means "You called what name?" The answer will generally include one's full name; surname first, then the given name. You can also just answer with your given name, but generally, we give Cantonese names in full when inquired after, as in the response from the dialogue.

For Example:

1. 我叫成龍。  
ngo5 giu3 sing4 lung4.  
"I'm Jacky Chan." (Literally, "I am called Jacky Chan.")  
Or:
2. 我個名叫成龍。  
ngo5 go3 meng2 giu3 sing4 lung4.  
"I'm Jacky Chan." (Literally, "I am called Jacky Chan.")

Both are acceptable ways of saying "My name is Jacky Chan."

Supplementary Sentence:

1. 佢叫咩名?  
keoi5 giu3 mel meng2?  
"What is his/her/its name?"

Formal Method of Inquiring Someone's Name

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There are two ways of asking someone's name in Cantonese. In this lesson, we focus on the less formal method, as in the example above.

The more formal way to ask is to inquire of someone's family name.

For Example:

1. 你貴姓?  
nei5 guai3 sing3?  
Literally, "Your expensive surname?"

This is a very honorable form of address. The 貴 (guai3) is an honorific reference and therefore, we would not use it when referring to oneself. One would simply answer:

1. 我姓 (surname).  
ngo5 sing3 (surname).  
"My surname is (surname)."

One can also start by introducing his or herself either formally or informally, and then in turn, inquire about the other person's name.

For Example:

1. 我姓 (surname). 你貴姓?  
ngo5 sing3 (surname). nei5 guai3 sing3?  
"My surname is (surname). What is your surname?"

## The Site

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The site is where it all comes together. There you can find bonus audio tracks, a voice recorder, lesson notes, grammar resources, line-by-line audio, a wonderful Cantonese learning community, and much more. It's like your teacher, textbook, dictionary, grammar resources, study tools, support group, and more—all in one convenient place.

Cantonese are very group-centric, so a great first step to learning to interact with Cantonese people is to participate in our great online community. So if you need some clarification about something, post it on the blog or in the forums, or send us an e-mail. We're here to help.

If you're new to Cantonese or CantoneseClass101.com, you should start listening to the introduction lessons first, which explain how our system works. We have many more lessons for you after that!

## Cultural Insight

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### Cultural Insight Section

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In the cultural insight section, we explain living in Cantonese-speaking cities, interacting with the culture, simple ways to avoid misunderstandings, and tips on using Cantonese that you won't find in any textbook. Understanding Cantonese culture is very important because there's much more to communication in Cantonese than just the words. Vocal tone, facial expressions, word choice, and even grammar itself are often governed by culture.

### Choosing Cantonese Names Carefully

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When learning a new language, you may be interested in getting a new name. It may be tempting to pick something that sounds good to your own ear; after all, you always hated that name you were stuck with from mom and dad. But take it under advisement...you're going to need to call in a favor on this aspect. Cantonese names are full of meaning and not just anything goes! There are certain characters that are last names; not just any word will do. Also, certain combinations of characters are more typically male or female names. So, unless you want to end up with some odd looks and maybe a few laughs, make sure to ask a Cantonese friend to help you choose an appropriate name.

Sometimes Cantonese people will choose a name for you that sounds similar to your English name. Other times, they will choose one that's meaning suits you or your personality or character. Nowadays however, many Cantonese people have their own English names and prefer to be called those rather than their original Cantonese names, especially when interacting with a foreigner. They're also pretty comfortable at using your English name, so you don't need to have a Cantonese name unless you want one.