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Lower Intermediate S1

Chinese Construction Keeping You Awake?

22

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

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Traditional Chinese

- A 樓下因乜事咁嘈？
B 施緊工啊。
A 夜媽媽施乜工？
B 爆水渠，宜家搶修緊。
A 今晚實冇覺好瞓。

Jyutping

- A Lau4 haa6 jan1 mat1 si6 gam3 cou4?
B Si1 gan2 gong1 aa3.
A Je6 ma1 ma1 si1 mat3 gong1?
B Baau3 seoi2 koi4,ji4 gaa1 ceong2 sau1 gan2?
A Gam1 maan5 sat6 mou5 gaau3 hou2 fan3.

English

- A Why is it so noisy down there?
B There's construction work.
A Why is there construction work at such a late hour?
B The water pipe burst and is under emergency repair.
A It will surely be a sleepless night tonight.

Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
因乜事	jan1 mat1 si6	for what/why
嘈	cou4	noisy
施工	si1 gong1	construction
夜媽媽	je6 ma1 ma1	night hours
爆	baau3	to burst
水渠	seoi2 keoi4	water pipe
搶修	ceong2 saau1	emergency repair
實	sat6	surely
無覺好瞓	mou5 gaau3 hou2 fan3	sleepless

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

你知唔知因乜事搞到佢咁唔開心啊?	Nei5 zi1 m4 zi1 jan1 mat1 si6 gaau2 dou3 koi5 gam3 m4 hoi1 sam1 aa3?	Do you know why he is so unhappy?
佢覺得要睇住班嘈攞巴閉嘅細路好煩。	Koi5 gok3 dak1 jiu3 tai2 zyu6 baan1 cou4 lyun1 baa1 bai3 ge3 sai3 lou6 hou2 faan4.	She had some trouble looking after the noisy children.
呢間公司缺乏施工同埋管理項目嘅經驗。	Nei1 gaan1 gong1 si1 kyut3 fat6 si1 gong1 tung4 maai4 gwun2 lei5 hong6 muk6 ge3 ging1 jim6.	This company lacks of proof experience in construction project management.
夜媽媽好心你就唔好嘈住曬人地訓覺啦。	Je6 ma1 ma1 hou2 sam1 nei5 zau5 m4 hou2 cou4 zyu6 saai3 jan4 dei6 fan3 gaau3 laa1.	Please do not disturb others when they are sleeping at night hour.
佢演講完之後，全場爆發出一陣掌聲。	Koi5 jin2 gong2 jyun4 zi1 hau6,cyun4 ceong4 baau3 faat3 jat1 zan6 zeong2 sing1.	The entire hall burst into applause after his speech.
你千奇唔好將啲電線接係水渠上面。	Nei5 cin1 kei4 m4 hou2 zeong1 di1 din6 sin3 zip3 hai2 seoi2 keoi4 seong6 min6.	You should never connect an electric wire to a water pipe.
我哋而家就要搶修，如果唔係後果好嚴重。	Ngo5 dei6 ji4 gaa1 zau6 jiu3 ceong2 saau1,jyu4 gwo2 m4 hai6 haau6 gwo2 hou2 jim4 zung6.	We need emergency repair now, if not the consequences will be grievous
咁辛苦先考完試，我地實要慶祝下。	Gam3 san1 fu2 sin1 haau2 jyun4 si5,ngo5 dei6 sat6 jiu3 hing3 zuk1 haa5.	We've had such a hard time finishing the test, so we really must celebrate.
仲有咁多作業未做，睇嚟今晚又無覺好訓。	Zung6 jau5 gam3 do1 zok3 jip6 mei6 zou6,tai2 lai4 gam1 maan5 jau6 mou5 gaau3 hou2 fan3.	With so much homework, we'll surely have a sleepless night tonight.

Grammar Points

An advanced way to negate a reversed verb

今晚實冇覺好訓。

"It will surely be a sleepless night tonight."

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In previous lessons we've run into verbs that get reversed when they are put into the negative. For instance, when we put 做嘢 (to work) into a negative sentence, we end up with the phrase 无嘢做 (to have no work to do). Today, we want to cover another way to negate a reversed verb, as we see in this sentence in our dialogue: 今晚實冇覺好瞓 ("It will surely be a sleepless night tonight").

The technique being used here is to reverse our verbs as we have previously learned and then add a 好 to the end of the phrase. This carries the same meaning as the original negation, but comes across as a much more casual way of speaking. It also has another advantage in many cases, in keeping the phrase to four-characters, which helps maintain syllable balance and makes the sentence sound better to native speakers.

For more examples of this type of negation in practice, consider the following examples, and note the way 冇 and 无 are interchangeable in this structure:

1. 寻晚外面施工太嘈搞到我无觉好训。
It was too noisy last night because of the construction and I didn't sleep.
2. 如果唔系你挪走我个衣柜我就唔会无衫好着。
If you did not take away my wardrobe, I would have something to wear.
3. 最衰今日咁大雨啦，搞到我无街好行。
It's too bad that today it's raining so hard and I can't go shopping.

4

Cultural Insight

Construction can be a huge problem for people living in Hong Kong and the reason is that the city is so crowded. Recently, the per-capita living space in Hong Kong has fallen to 7.1 square meters and the average prices of housing have risen to 60,000 to 100,000 HKD per square meter. This has created a strange phenomenon in which more than 36% of the population lives in cheap public rental housing developed by the government in Hong Kong. According to government regulations, the price of these rentals should not be more than 10% of the tenant's family income.