



Lower Intermediate S1 Going on a Cantonese Book Hunt

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Traditional Chinese

- A 你可唔可以幫我搵本書？
B 可以，係咩類型嘅書？小說？
A 非小說，人物傳記。
B 喺二樓。
A 唔該。
B 有需要嘅話，隨時啖我。

Jyutping

- A nei5 ho2 ng4 ho2 ji5 bong1 ngo5 wan2 bun2 syu1 ?
B ho2 ji5 , hai6 me1 lei6 jing4 ge3 syu1 ? siu2 syut3 ?
A fei1 siu2 syut3 , jan4 mat6 zyun6 gei3。
B hai2 ji6 lau2。
A ng4 goi1。
B jau5 seoi1 jiu3 ge3 waa2 , ceoi4 si4 aai3 ngo5。

English

- A Can you help me find this book?
B Sure, what kind of book is it? Fiction?
A Non-fiction. Biography.
B That's on the second floor.
A Thanks.
B If you need help just call me.

Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
類型	lei6 jing4	type
小說	siu2 syut3	fiction; novel
非小說	fei1 siu2 syut3	non-fiction
人物傳記	an4 mat2 zyun6 gei3	biography
自傳	zi6 zyun2	autobiography
歷史	lik6 si2	history
愛情小說	oi3 cing4 siu2 syut3	romance
文學	man4 hok6	literature
哲學	zit3 hok6	philosophy

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

你鍾意咩類型嘅男仔？	nei5 zung1 ji3 me1 lei6 jing4 ge3 naam4 zai2 ?	Which type of boys do you like?
我鍾意睇生活化啲嘅小說，讓我覺得好輕鬆。	ngo5 zung1 ji3 tai2 sang1 wut6l faa3 di1 ge3 siu2 syut3 , joeng6 ngo5 gok3 dak1 hou2 hing1 sung1 。	I like seeing more lifelike novels, they make me feel more relaxed.
非小說類書籍放咗喺嗰邊。	fei1 siu2 syut3 lei6 syu1 zik6 fong3 zo2 hai2 go2 bin1。	Non-fiction books are over there.
人物傳記記述人物嘅生平事跡。	jan4 mat6 zyun6 gei3 gei3 seot6 jan4 mat2 ge3 sang1 ping4 si6 zik1。	Biography describes the character's life story.
我好遺憾佢冇寫一本自傳。	ngo5 hou2 wai4 ham6 keoi5 mou5 se2 jat1 bun2 zi6 zyun2.	I'm upset he didn't write an autobiography.
我想買有關中國歷史嘅書。	ngo5 soeng2 maai5 jau5 gwaan1 zung1 gwok3 lik6 si2 ge3 syu1.	I want to buy a book about Chinese history.
唔知佢鍾唔鍾意睇愛情小說呢？	ng4 zi1 keoi5 zung1 ng4 zung1 ji3 tai2 oi3 cing4 siu2 syut3 ne1 ?	Do you know if he likes to read romance novels?
我睇緊本書係關於文學。	ngo5 tai2 gan2 bun2 syu1 hai6 gwaan1 jyu1 man4 hok6.	I'm reading a book about literature.
請問哲學書放喺邊度？	cing2 man6 zit3 hok6 syu1 fong3 hai6 bin1 dou6 ?	Excuse me, where are the philosophy books?

Grammar Points

The Focus of this Lesson is "If you don't know this grammar point..."

有需要嘅話，隨時嗌我。

"If you need help, call me anytime."

Our grammar point today is a simple sentence pattern used to introduce hypothetical cases, where something might happen. In our dialogue we see this in the line 有需要嘅話，隨時嗌我 *jau5 sei1 jiu3 ge3 waa2 , ceoi4 si4 aai3 ngo5* ("if you need help, call me") which closes the discussion. The structure here involves using the word 嘅話 *ge3 waa2* ("if") to close a hypothetical clause, and then follow that clause with another clause containing the action to be taken or situation that will occur in the event of the hypothetical situation being true. Our structure is Clause A, followed by 嘅話, and then followed by Clause B. Consider the two following examples:

1. 你鍾意睇非小說類嘅話，試下睇哲學書。

"If you prefer reading non-fiction, try one on philosophy."

2. 你想睇人物傳記嘅話，Steve Jobs 嘅點啊？

"If you want to read a biography, how about Steve Jobs's?"

On a closing note, we should mention that in some colloquial situations you will hear people omit the character 嘅 when using this pattern. The meaning in this case is exactly the same: this is simply a slightly less formal way of communicating.

Cultural Insight

Finding English Bookstores in Hong Kong

English language bookstores abound in Hong Kong, while Chinese language stores are actually somewhat harder to find. Ironically, one of the best ways to find a nearby Chinese language bookstore is to go to an English language bookstore and ask! The stores rarely have overlapping stock, and face the question often enough to know the answer.