



Survival Phrases S1

Basic Cantonese Greetings

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Traditional Chinese

你好
早晨
早啱

Jyutping

nei5 hou2
zou2 san4
zou2 tau2

English

Hello.
Good morning.
Good night.

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Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
你好	nei5 hou2	hello
早晨	zou2 san4	Good morning.
早啱	zou2 tau2	Good night.

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

人們在說你好。

jan4 mun4 zoi6 syut3 nei5
hou2.

The people are saying, "Hello."

早晨。
早啱。

zou2 san4.
zou2 tau2.

Good morning.
Good night.

Grammar Points

The universal greeting in Hong Kong and Guangdong is 你好 (nei5 hou2). This literally means "You good." Both of the syllables are using rising tones with the second tone being slightly higher than the first. If someone says hello to you, you can respond simply by repeating 你好.

"Good morning" in Cantonese is 早晨 (zou2 san4). 早 is "morning," and when combined with 晨, the two characters mean "daybreak."

In Cantonese, there are no special greetings for the afternoons or evenings. However, there is one greeting that you can use at night. 早啱 (zou2 tau2) literally means "early break" or "to have a rest early." We use it in the context of "good night." 啱 means "rest."

Cultural Insight

Quick Tip: 1

You can use 你好 (nei5 hou2) in almost any scenario. In addition to meaning "Hello," you can use 你好 to introduce yourself to someone new and to draw attention to someone or something. You will often hear waiters say this you at a restaurant when they have just brought you your food.