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Survival Phrases S1
Do You Speak English?

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Traditional Chinese

Jyutping

sik1
gong2
jing1 man2
gwong2 dung1 waa2

English

to know
to speak
English
Cantonese

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Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
	sik1	to know
	gong2	to speak
	jing1 man2	English
	gwong2 dung1 waa2	Cantonese language

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 jing1 man2   Do you speak English?

m4 goi1 gong2 do1 ci3   Can you repeat that please?

nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2?	Do you speak Cantonese?
nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 jing1 man2	Do you speak English?
ngo5 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2	I (know how to) speak Cantonese.
nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2	Do you (know how to) speak Cantonese?

Grammar Points

In the Cantonese question form, to ask if something is able to do something, you use the following formula:

verb +   + verb

The verb is repeated, while we use the character   (*m4*) to negate the second verb. In the question from the lesson   ? *(nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 jing1 man4)* - "Do you know how to speak English?" you can see the reduplicated verb   . This is the same as asking in English "Are you able?" but it directly translates to "to know or not to know."

You can replace English with any other language or other learned skill. For instance, replace "English" with "Cantonese" (   ):   *(nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2)* - "Do you speak Cantonese?"

Cultural Insight

Quick Tip: 1

The first dictionary of the Cantonese language by a westerner was written in 1828 by a protestant missionary named Robert Morrison. The title of the book was *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect.*

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