



Survival Phrases S1

I Don't Understand

8

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Traditional Chinese

我
唔
明
知
知道
咩
意思

Jyutping

ngo5
m4
ming4
zi1
zi1 dou3
me1
ji3 si1

English

I
not
to understand
to know
to know
what
meaning

Vocabulary

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Traditional	Jyutping	English
我	ngo5	I
唔	m4	not
明白	ming4 baak6	to understand
知道	zi1 dou3	to know
知	zi1	to know
咩	me1	what
意思	ji3 si1	meaning

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

我叫Nicole。 佢老公唔高興。	ngo5 giu3 Nicole。 keoi5 lou5 gung1 m4 gou1 hing3。	I'm (called) Nicole. Her husband's not happy.
佢唔係男仔。 小學生明白問題。	keoi5 m4 hai6 naam4 zai2。 siu2 hok6 sang1 ming4 baak6 man6 tai4	She is not a boy. The elementary school students understand the question.
我唔明。 我唔知 我知道。 我唔知。 你叫咩名？ 咩意思？	ngo5 m4 ming4。 ngo5 m4 zi1 ngo5 zi1 dou3。 ngo5 m4 zi1。 nei5 giu3 me1 meng2 ? me1 ji3 si1?	I don't understand. I don't know I know. I don't know. What's your name? What does it mean?

Grammar Points

The word for "understand" in Cantonese is 明白 (ming4 baak6). Taken apart, the first character, 明, is "bright" or "clear," and the second character, 白, is "white." Together it means "bright and white," something along the lines of "I read you loud and clear" in English.

Cultural Insight

Quick Tip #1

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Don't be afraid to admit that you don't understand what someone is saying. Simply reply 唔明白 (m4 ming4 baak6) - "I don't understand." Usually the person you are speaking to will automatically understand your predicament and repeat themselves a little bit slower.