CantoneseClass101.com

LESSON NOTES

Survival Phrases S1 #7
Do You Speak English?

CONTENTS

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TRADITIONAL CHINESE

1. 識

2. 講

3. 英文

4. 廣東話

JYUTPING

1. sik1

2. gong2

3. jing1 man2

4. gwong2 dung1 waa2

ENGLISH

1. to know

2. to speak

3. English

4. Cantonese

VOCABULARY

Traditional	Romanization	English	Class
識	sik1	to know	verb
講	gong2	to speak	verb
英文	jing1 man2	English	noun
廣東話	gwong2 dung1 waa2	Cantonese language	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

你識唔識講英文?
nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 jing1 man2 ?

Do you speak English?

你識唔識英文?
nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 jing1 man2 ?

Do you speak English?

你識唔識講廣東話?
nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2 ?

Do you (know how to) speak Cantonese?

你識唔識講廣東話?
nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2?

Do you speak Cantonese?

我識講廣東話。
ngo5 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2。

I (know how to) speak Cantonese.

GRAMMAR

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

verb + 唔 + verb

The verb is repeated, while we use the character 唔 (*m4*) to negate the second verb. In the question from the lesson 你識唔識講英文? *(nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 jing1 man4)* - "Do you know how to speak English?" you can see the reduplicated verb 識唔識. 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" (廣東話): 你識唔識講廣東話？ *(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.*