

LESSON NOTES

Survival Phrases S1 #8

I Don't Understand

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TRADITIONAL CHINESE

1. 我
2. 唔
3. 明
4. 知
5. 知道
6. 咩
7. 意思

JYUTPING

1. ngo5
2. m4
3. ming4
4. zi1
5. zi1 dou3
6. me1
7. ji3 si1

ENGLISH

CONT'D OVER

1. I
2. not
3. to understand
4. to know
5. to know
6. what
7. meaning

VOCABULARY

Traditional	Romanization	English	Class
我	ngo5	I	pronoun
唔	m4	not	co-verb
明白	ming4 baak6	to understand	verb
知道	zi1 dou3	to know	verb
知	zi1	to know	verb
咩	me1	what	pronoun
意思	ji3 si1	meaning	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>我叫Nicole。 <i>ngo5 giu3 Nicole。</i></p> <p>I'm (called) Nicole.</p>	<p>佢老公唔高興。 <i>keoi5 lou5 gung1 m4 gou1 hing3。</i></p> <p>Her husband's not happy.</p>
<p>佢唔係男仔。 <i>keoi5 m4 hai6 naam4 zai2。</i></p> <p>She is not a boy.</p>	<p>小學生明白問題。 <i>siu2 hok6 sang1 ming4 baak6 man6 tai4。</i></p> <p>The elementary school students understand the question.</p>
<p>我唔明。 <i>ngo5 m4 ming4。</i></p> <p>I don't understand.</p>	<p>我唔知。 <i>ngo5 m4 zi1。</i></p> <p>I don't know.</p>
<p>我知道。 <i>ngo5 zi1 dou3。</i></p> <p>I know.</p>	<p>我唔知。 <i>ngo5 m4 zi1。</i></p> <p>I don't know.</p>
<p>發生咩事? <i>Faat3 saang1 me1 si6 ?</i></p> <p>What happened?</p>	<p>你叫咩名? <i>nei5 giu3 me1 meng2 ?</i></p> <p>What's your name?</p>
<p>咩意思? <i>me1 ji3 si1 ?</i></p> <p>What does it mean?</p>	

GRAMMAR

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

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.