

Effective Language's Mandarin Chinese Unit One
Vocabulary List and Supplemental Notes

Warning:

We recommend that you not look at this vocabulary list and the notes for a given lesson until after you have completed that audio lesson. This is to help ensure that the way of writing the words in the roman alphabet does not influence your pronunciation. Additionally, you should not need to actively memorize the words in the list, since the audio lesson is designed to help you remember naturally.

Contents:

Herein are provided a list of vocabulary from each lesson for your reference. For example, you can use this list to start learning the Chinese character writing system, or to show your Chinese speaking friends so that they practice with you within your vocabulary. Notes are also provided to shed additional light on some grammatical points.

Lesson 1

我	Wo3	I, Me	
你	Ni3	You	
他/她/它	Ta1	He, Him, She, Her, It	
誰	Shei2	Who	
我們	Wo3 men2	We, Us	
他們	Ta1 men2	They, Them	
你們	Ni3 men2	You (plural)	
的	De	's	“Joe's”
中文	Zhong1 wen2	Chinese language	
想	Xiang3	Would like to	
不	Bu4	Not	
嗎	Ma1	Question mark for yes no questions	

Notes

The word order we use in this lesson is the same as in English. Sometimes Chinese word order is different from English word order. In later lessons we teach you the correct Chinese word order.

Lesson 2

說	Shuo1	Say or speak
這	Zhe4	This
那	Na4	That
個	Ge4	Unit
有	You3	Have/has/had
沒	Mei2	Have not/has not/had not

Notes

In English we refer to “this *glass* of water” or “one *flock* of birds.” In Chinese all words have an associated counter or measure word like “*glass*” or “*flock*.” Rather than saying “This person” in Chinese you will say “This *unit* of person.” The word for *units* of people and many other types of objects is “ge4.” The words for “this” and “that” are “Zhe4” and “Na4”

Lesson 3

用	Yong4	Use	
有用	You3 yong4	Useful	
的	De	That	“The one <u>that</u> I like”
很	Hen3	Very	

Notes

In English we use the word “is” in sentences like “the car *is* useful”, “the house *is* big.” Chinese usually omits “is” in sentences with a simple adjective and says simply “the car useful”, “the house big.”

In English we may say “*the useful car is big*” or “*the car that is useful is big*.” Note that when we put “car” before “useful” we add the word “that.” In English we can also say “*The car that he is using is big*” but we cannot convey the same meaning by saying “*He is using car is big*.” In Chinese the word order is always the same as “*the useful car is big*,” but the word “de” is added between useful and car: “*the useful de car is big*”. In Chinese, we can say “*He is using de car is big*.” This is actually quite cool. When you become fluent in Chinese you may find it annoying that this grammatical construct does not exist in English.

In Chinese, yes no questions can be constructed by saying, for example, “you want not want go?” meaning “do you want to go?”

Lesson 4

怎麼	Zen3 me	How
什麼	She3 me	What
記得	Ji4 de2	Remember
應該	Ying1 gai1	Should

Notes

In Chinese some two syllable words are considered to be a single word, while others are considered to be a combination of a verb and an object. When making a yes no question in the form “want not want go?” a verb/object two syllable word gets split into two syllables, with the first (verb) syllable repeated. For example: “ji bu ji de” is used to ask “do you remember”. This is really confusing to English speakers because when translated back into English “ji de” means “remember” which is just a single word for us. You’ll have to pay attention to native speakers to determine which words split like this.

Lesson 5

這裡	Zhe4 li3	Here
那裡	Na4 li3	There
在	Zai4	To be located
放	Fang4	Put
把	Ba3	With regard to

Notes

In English we only put 's on the end of certain nouns. We say *my* and *his* instead of *I's* and *he's*. Likewise, we do not say *here's* and *there's*. If we want to say “*Here's* food is good”, we say “the food here is good”. Chinese is simpler. To say “*here's* food is good” we just say “*here's* food is good.”

In English we use the word “*is*” for things like “the dog *is* fat” “the car *is* in the driveway” and “this *is* a cat.” In Chinese “*is*” is omitted for simple adjectives (“the dog fat”), and the word “*Zai*,” meaning “to be located,” is used for “the car *is* in the driveway.” “*Zai*” does not mean “*is*” except in the sense of “is located,” so don't say “this *Zai* a cat.”

Lesson 6

一個	Yi1 ge4	One
幾個	Ji3 ge4	A couple
一些	Yi1 xie1	A few
這些	Zhe4 xie1	These
那些	Na4 xie1	Those
哪裡	Na3 li3	Where
哪個	Na3 ge4	Which

Notes

In Chinese, to ask what restaurants are around here, you would ask “here has what restaurants?” This is the same construct you would use to ask what drinks someone has (*ni you shen me drinks*), what's on the menu (*ni you shen me food*), what problems someone is having (*ni you shen me problems*), etc. It's very convenient to only need one way to ask all of these sorts of questions.

In Chinese, the difference between “*there*” and “*where*” and the difference between “*that*” and “*which*” is very subtle – it is the tone difference between “*na4*” and “*na3*.” This is very hard when you are still getting used to tones.

The Chinese word “*xie*” is so cool that it makes up for the annoyance of “*na4*” versus “*na3*.” With one word you can express “*these*” “*those*” and “*a few*.” The word “*xie*” essentially means “group” so you say “this group” “that group” and “a group.”

Lesson 7

跟	Gen1	With
一起	Yi1 qi3	Together
都	Dou1	All
是	Shi4	Is
喜歡	Xi3 huan1	Enjoy

Notes

In Chinese “zai yi qi,” with the literal meaning “are located together” often is used to mean “to be dating”.

In Chinese “dou” meaning “all” is always placed right before the verb “These cookies I *all* like” not “I like *all* these cookies.” “dou” also means “both” in the context of “this and that I *both* like”

You’d be surprised how many English speakers forget the difference between “would like to” (xiang3) and “to like” (xi3 huan1) when they start trying to learn a foreign language. Remember, just because I *like* music does not mean I *would like to* be woken up by it at four in the morning.

The Chinese word “shi” means “is” in contexts like “I *am* a person,” “This *is* my office.” It is not used for simple adjectives like “This *is* good,” nor for locations like “He *is* at the office”.

Earlier you learned to say sentences like “the book *that* I like” using the grammar “I like *de* book.” You can omit the word “book” to make a phrase similar to the English “that which I like” or “the one that I like.”

Lesson 9

有的	You3 de	Some of
大概	Da4 gai4	Probably
一定	Yi2 ding4	Definitely
每一個	Mei3 yi2 ge4	Every

Notes

In English we combine the word “every” with words “thing” “one” and “where” to make “everything” “everyone” and “everywhere.” We can even say “every which-way.” In Chinese we say “*what all*” “*where all*” “*who all*.”

In English we can say either “*some of* the books I don’t remember” or “I don’t remember *some of* the books.” In Chinese the order of the words is always “the books *you de* I don’t remember”

In English if someone says “I don’t like *all* of these trees” it can be hard to tell whether they mean that they dislike each and every one of the trees, or just that they would prefer fewer trees. In Chinese, you either say “These trees I *every one* don’t like” (zhe xie trees wo *dou* bu xihuan) or “I *am not* (a person that) likes *each and every one* of the trees” (zhe xie trees wo *bu shi mei yi ge dou* xi huan) – leaving the listener to assume that I am a person that may like one or two of them, but not all.

Lesson 10

也	Ye3	Also	“I like X, you <u>also</u> like X”
請	Qing3	Please	
要	Yao4	Want	
別	Bie2	Don't	
可以	Ke3 yi3	May	
但是	Dan4 shi4	But	

Notes

In Chinese, “dan shi”, meaning “but” is often abbreviated to “dan”

In English, the word “also” or “and” can be used in several very different situations. We can use it to combine two complete sentences: “I went to the grocery store, *also* I stopped by the bank.” We can use it to state two facts about one subject: “I went to the grocery store, *also* the bank.” Or we can use it to combine two subjects with one fact: “He *and also* I went to the grocery store.” In Chinese, there are different words for each of these three usages. This lesson teaches “ye” which is used when there are multiple subjects, as in “Oh, you went to the bank? I *also* went to the bank.”

In Chinese, “qing” is used to say “please” in a request. “qing ni,” literally meaning “please you” is a common alternate.

In English we say “I *want* an apple” or “I *want to* go.” The word “to” after the word “want” lets the listener know whether to expect a noun or a verb. In Chinese, there is no word “to,” so we say “I want apple” “I want go store.” We’ve translated “xiang” as “*Would like to*” because it is usually used only with verbs, as in “I *would like to* go.” In this lesson we introduce “yao” which just means “want” – it can be used with both “apple” and “go.” “xiang yao” means the same as “yao.”

In Chinese, “bu yao” or “don’t want” means “do not” in the command sense: “don’t go in there.” It can be abbreviated as “bie”.

Like “may” vs “can” in English, “ke3yi3” is used only to discuss permission or willingness, not ability.

Lesson 11

還	Hai2	Also	“I like X and <u>also</u> Y”
其他的	Qi2 ta1 de	The other(s)	
一樣	Yi2 yang4	The same	
去	Qu4	Go	

Notes

In the last lesson’s notes we mentioned that there are several usages of “also” or “and” in English. “ye” was introduced in the last lesson for sentences with multiple subjects. In a later lesson we will introduce “also” in the context of two separate sentences reinforcing a common point: “I don’t really like that movie, *also* I need to save money.” In this lesson we introduce “hai” which means “also” when there is only one subject: “I want to go to the store. I *also* want to go to the bank” or “I went to the store and *also* the bank.” In this second example, where only a noun, not a verb follows “also,” Chinese literally say “I go store *also* have bank,” rather than “also go bank.” Thus, “hai you” is a very common thing to hear.

In English, “other” has many meanings: “I want to go to *the other* store” means, implicitly that we have been talking about two stores, and that you know to which other store I’m referring. “I want to go to *another* store” means that I dislike this store and we haven’t discussed which store may be better. Chinese’s “qi ta de” is used only in the first sense.

“yi yang” means “one kind” or “the same.” To ask in what way two things are similar, you would ask “This *with* that *where* the same?” “zhe ge gen na ge na li yi yang”

Lesson 12

還	Hai2	Still or yet
沒	Mei2	Have not
學	Xue2	Learn
過	Guo4	Have ever done
知道	Zhi1 dao4	Know

Notes

In English, we say “I *have* not gone to Spain” or “I *have* not been to Spain.” We add the word “*have*” and change the form of the word “go” or “be” to indicate that we are talking about the past. In Chinese verbs do not change, so to say I have gone to Spain you will simply add “*have*” without changing “go”, e.g. “I *have* not go Spain,” “wo mei you qu Spain.”

In Chinese, when answering a question or correcting someone, you may say “I *have* go Spain,” “wo you qu Spain.” However, if you are not correcting someone or answering a question this sounds overly emphatic. Instead you may say “wo qu guo Spain” which means, essentially, “I have had the experience of going to Spain at some point in my life.”

In Chinese the word “hai” that we learned earlier for “*also*” also means “*still*” or “*yet*,” as in “I *still* want to go” or “I have not *yet* gone.” The word order when used to mean *yet* is: “I *still* not go” (wo hai mei qu)

Lesson 13

因為	Yin1 wei4	Because
所以	Suo3 yi3	Therefore
已經	Yi3 jing1	Already
了	Le4	-ed
忘記	Wang4 ji4	Forget

“wanted”

Notes

In English we change our verbs to make the past tense: “*eat*” to “*ate*,” “*work*” to “*worked*.” In Chinese you can add “le” onto the end of the verb “wo wang ji le zhong wen” or onto the end of the sentence “wo wang ji zhong wen le.” Adding “le” on a sentence implies that the action has been completed.

Lesson 14

上	Shang4	Previous or up
下	Xia4	Next or down
次	Ci4	A time or occurrence of an event
爲什麼	Wei4 she3 me	Why

Notes

In English we can say “*why* do you like this restaurant” or “*how can you* like this restaurant.” These sentences differ in their politeness and level of disbelief. “Wei shen me” and “zen me” can be used in Chinese in the same way.

Lesson 16

先	Xian1	First
再	Zai4	After that
現在	Xian4 zai4	Now
而且	Er2 qie3	Furthermore

Notes

In this lesson you learn a new word “zai,” that is pronounced the same as the one that means “to be located.” “zai” is similar to the English word “and then” as in “I want to go the bank *and then* go to the store” but is usually used when talking about the future. You would not use “zai” if you said “I went to the store *and then* went to the bank.”

You’ve learned “ye” and “hai” can be used to say “also” in different contexts. “er qie” is used to say “and,” “also,” “furthermore,” or “besides” in the context where you want to combine two full sentences to emphasize a single point. “I don’t like that movie *and also* I’m trying to save money.”

Lesson 17

時候	Shi2 hou4	Time
的時候	De4 shi2 hou4	When / while
以後	Yi3 hou4	After
以前	Yi3 qian2	Before
懂	Dong3	Understand

Notes

When translated to English “shi hou” and “ci” both mean “time.” “ci” is only used for occurrences of events, such as trips to the store as in “next *time* I go to the store, I’ll buy it” “xia ci I go to the store, I’ll buy it.” “Shi hou” is used to refer to points in time. To ask “*when* was the last *time* you went to the store” you would say “last ci you go to the store is what shi hou”

In English, we can say “*after* I went to the bank, I went to the store” or “I went to the store *after* I went to the bank” – the word “*after*” goes either before or after the description of the earlier action. Chinese always says “I went to the store yi hou I went to the bank” or “I went to the store yi qian I went to the bank” meaning “*after/before* I went to the store, I went to the bank.”

To say “while I was at work” or “when I went to China” in Chinese, you literally say “I was at work’s time” or “I go China’s time,” hence the “de” in the phrase “de shi hou.”

Lesson 18

以爲	Yi3 wei2	Had thought but now realize are wrong	
希望	Xi1 wang4	Hope	
才	Cai2	Only then	
得	De4	-ly	“quickly”
好	Hao3	Good	

Notes

In English, we can say “I thought the store was over here.” We use what sounds like the past tense to imply that we may be mistaken. In Chinese you either say “I *think* the store is over here,” not admitting the possibility of a mistake, or “I yi wei the store is over here,” meaning “I was definitely mistaken, the store is not over here”. To express that you’re unsure you should ask: “*isn’t* the store over here?” “the store bu zai zhe li ma?”

In English, we add “ly” on the end of adjectives to make them into adverbs “he is quick” to “he ran quickly.” In Chinese we use “de”: “he quick” “he run de quick.” But this “de” is far more versatile than English’s “ly” because you use it not just on adjectives, but on complete sentences, as in “He run de faster than you” or “He run de like the wind.”

In English we often say “you can’t eat your desert until you’ve finished dinner.” In Chinese “cai” is used to indicate that something is necessary for something else, but grammar is more similar to the English “only then.” “You must finish your dinner cai eat desert.”

Lesson 19

本來	Ben3 lai2	Originally
又	You4	Again (in the past)
剛剛	Gang1 gang1	Just now
後來	Hou4 lai2	In the end

Lesson 20

比	Bi3	Compared to	
比較	Bi3 jiao4	Comparatively or –er	“faster”
最	Zui4	Most or –est	“fastest”
真的	Zhen1 de	Truly, Really, True, or Real	
其實	Qi2 shi2	In fact	

Notes

Remember the “de” from lesson 18.

To say “I speak faster than you” we can say “I speak de bi you fast” or “I bi you speak de fast.”

To say “I speak faster” without comparing directly with another, we just say “I speak de bijiao fast” or “I bijiao speak de fast.”

To say “I speak fastest” we say “I speak de zui fast.”

Lesson 21

如果	Ru2 guo3	If
那	Na4	Then
需要	Xu1 yao4	Need, must
要不然	Yao4 bu4 ran2	Otherwise / or else
也許	Ye3 xu3	Maybe

Lesson 23

那麼	Na4 me	That much
得那麼	De4 na4 me	As much as
這麼	Zhe4 me	This much
想	Xiang3	Think
沒想到	Mei2 xiang3 dao4	Didn't expect
或者	Huo4 zhe	Or (in statements)
還是	Hai2 shi4	Or (in questions)

Notes

In Chinese, “xiang” means both “*would like to*” and “*think*.” You’ll have to differentiate by context. If you’re friend says “I xiang not arrive in time” she probably means “I *think* we won’t arrive in time,” rather than “I *would like to* be late.”

In English, we can say “It’s not *as* far as you said.” In Chinese this would be “It is not you said *de na me* far,” which is a little bit like saying “It is not you said’s *as* far.” It’s a really neat use of ‘s.

Chinese has two different words for *or*: “*huo zhe*” and “*hai shi*.” The second is used only when the listener is supposed to pick one of the choices. The former is used in all other situations. Thus: “Do you want pizza *or* sushi?” uses “*hai shi*” if they must pick only one. This distinction is neat because it lets you clearly say things like: “Do you want to go to the food court where we can have pizza *or* sushi *or* the restaurant where we can have pasta or gnocchi.” The listener is supposed to choose between food court and restaurant, not between pizza, sushi, pasta and gnocchi, so in Chinese you will ask “Do you want to go to the food court where we can have pizza *huo zhe* sushi *hai shi* the restaurant where we can have pasta *huo zhe* gnocchi.” It’s clearer to the listener what options they are supposed to choose between.

Lesson 24

從	Cong2	From
到	Dao4	Arrive at
來	Lai2	Come
這邊	Zhe4 bian1	Over here
那邊	Na4 bian1	Over there

Notes

In Chinese, to ask where someone is from you ask “you are from where come *de*” (*ni shi cong nali lai de?*). To ask if a bus or train makes a stop at a particular location, you ask if they “arrive at” the location (*dao*).

Lesson 25

雖然	Sui1 ran2	Although
不過	Bu2 guo4	Never the less
太X了	Tai4 X le	Too X
多	Duo1	Much / many
一點	Yi1 dian3	A little bit
只	Zhi3	Only

Notes

In English we say: “there was a time,” “there is a restaurant,” etc. In Chinese we say “has a time” “has a restaurant” for example “you yi ci.”

In Chinese, to say “this is *too* good,” or “that is *too* far” you say “this tai good le” or “that tai far le.” When saying that it is *not too* good you leave off the le.

In Chinese, as in English “*bu guo*” (meaning “*nevertheless*” or “*but in any case*”) is often used without “sui ran” (“although”). For example one person may say “I hear Taipei is very polluted,” to which someone else may respond “*bu guo* its parks are still very beautiful,” or “*bu guo* wo hai xiang qu” (“nevertheless, I still want to go”).

Lesson 26

不夠	Bu2 gou4	Not enough
夠了	Gou4 le	Enough
對	Dui4	Correct
再	Zai4	Again (in the future)

Notes

In Chinese, “*gou*” (enough) can be combined with adjectives such as “*gou hao*” “*gou duo*” “*gou fast*” “*gou far*” to make “good enough” “plentiful enough” “fast enough” and “far enough.”

In Chinese, both “*zai*” and “*you*” can be used to express the concept “again.” The difference between “*zai*” and “*you*” is that “*you*” is used for things that repeated in the past, whereas “*zai*” is used for things that will repeat in the future.

Things can become confusing for English speakers when a sentence contains multiple verbs, such as “I again want to go.” This sentence contains the verb “want” and the verb “go.” You can apply “again” to “go,” as in “I have gone in the past and I want to again go (*in the future*),” or you can apply “again” to “want” as in “In the past I wanted to go, and I again (*now*) feel such want.” The trick is that in the first sentence, the repeated action (going) is in the future, so you’ll use “*zai*”. But in the second sentence, the repeated action (wanting) is already happening, so you’ll use “*you*”.

In English, we say “You like pizza, *right*?” The Chinese equivalent is “You like pizza, *dui bu dui*?”

Lesson 27

想	Xiang3	Think
就	Jiu4	Just
這樣	Zhe4 yang4	This way
那樣	Na4 yang4	That way
怎麼樣	Zen3 me yang4	How, what way

Notes

In English we use the word “*just*” in many ways, like “I *just* don’t understand,” “I’m *just* saying,” “When I found out I *just* cried.” In Chinese, the word “*jiu*” is used to mean “*just*” in all of these contexts. Note that in English we’ll say “I’m *just* saying...” In Chinese it will be “I *just* am saying” or “wo *jiu shi shuo*.” It can be tricky to understand when to say just “*jiu*” and when to say “*jiu shi*,” but it’s not a very important type of mistake to worry about. Remember that if you mean “*just* a little” as in “*only* a little” you should use “*zhi*.”

In Chinese, “*zenme yang*” can be used to ask in what way something should be done, or how well something was done. For instance: “I spoke *de zenme yang*?” is a good way to ask how fluently you spoke. “*zenme yang*?” as a question by itself can mean “how’s that?” “what do you mean?” or “how was whatever you were just talking about.”

The word “*hen*” meaning “very” is much more common in Chinese than in English. Sometimes your sentences will be clearer if you add it – it helps the listener know that the next word will be an adjective.

Lesson 28

一下	Yi2 xia4	A moment
等	Deng3	Wait
繼續	Ji4 xu4	Continue
啊	a	Emphasis sound on the end of a sentence
吧	ba	Suggestion sound on the end of a sentence

Notes

In Chinese, “*yi xia*” or “*yi xia xia*” can be placed after a verb to indicate that it will be quick or easy. For example: “come here *a moment*” would be “*lai yi xia*.”

As you’ve noticed by now Chinese lacks little words like “*to*,” “*for*,” “*of*,” etc. To say “wait *for* me”, you just say “wait me”.

Conversations or discussions are often ended with “*na jiu zhe yang a*” and orders at restaurants are often ended with “*xian jiu zhe yang*.” Meaning, “that’s it *for now*.” Occasionally you will hear a “*zi*” sound at the end of “*zhe yang*.”

Lesson 29

不好意思	Bu4 hao3 yi4 si	Excuse me
麻煩你	Ma2 fan2 ni3	May I trouble you to...
問	Wen4	Ask
呢	ne	What about? Sound on the end of a sentence

Notes

To ask what someone means, ask “ni de yi si shi shen me?” or say “wo bu dong ni de yi si.” To ask what a word or phrase X means, ask “X de yi si shi shen me?”

Words like “ma fan” and “wen” literally mean “trouble” and “ask,” but “ma2 fan2 ni3” often means “may I trouble you” as opposed to the literal “I trouble you”, and “qing3 wen4” often means “may I ask you”, as opposed to the literal “please ask”.

In English we can ask questions like “what about Joe?” In Chinese you just say “Joe ne?”