**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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>說</td>
<td>Shuo1</td>
<td>Say or speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>這</td>
<td>Zhe4</td>
<td>This</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>那</td>
<td>Na4</td>
<td>That</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>個</td>
<td>Ge4</td>
<td>Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>有</td>
<td>You3</td>
<td>Have/has/had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>沒</td>
<td>Mei2</td>
<td>Have not/has not/had not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 that 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 “zái,” meaning “to be located,” is used for “the car is in the driveway.” “Zái” does not mean “is” except in the sense of “is located,” so don’t say “this zái 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 (nǐ you shén me drinks), what’s on the menu (nǐ you shén me food), what problems someone is having (nǐ you shén 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 “ná4” and “ná3.” This is very hard when you are still getting used to tones.

The Chinese word “xìe” is so cool that it makes up for the annoyance of “ná4” versus “ná3.” With one word you can express “these” “those” and “a few.” The word “xìe” 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 “zài yì qí,” with the literal meaning “are located together” often is used to mean “to be dating”.

In Chinese “dōu” meaning “all” is always placed right before the verb “These cookies I all like” not “I like all these cookies.” “dōu” 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” (xiǎng3) 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 “shì” 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>也</td>
<td>Ye3</td>
<td>Also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>請</td>
<td>Qing3</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>要</td>
<td>Yao4</td>
<td>Want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>別</td>
<td>Bie2</td>
<td>Don’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>可以</td>
<td>Ke3 yi3</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>但是</td>
<td>Dan4 shi4</td>
<td>But</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I like X, you also like X”

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>還</td>
<td>Hai2</td>
<td>Also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>其他的</td>
<td>Qi2 ta1 de</td>
<td>The other(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一樣</td>
<td>Yi2 yang4</td>
<td>The same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>去</td>
<td>Qu4</td>
<td>Go</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I like X and also Y”

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  “wanted”
忘記  Wang4 ji4  Forget

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
為什麼  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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>以為</td>
<td>Yi3 wei2</td>
<td>Had thought but now realize are wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>希望</td>
<td>Xi1 wang4</td>
<td>Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>才</td>
<td>Cai2</td>
<td>Only then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>得</td>
<td>De4</td>
<td>“quickly”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>好</td>
<td>Hao3</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 “ily” 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 “ily” 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 caï eat desert.”

**Lesson 19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>本來</td>
<td>Ben3 lai2</td>
<td>Originally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>又</td>
<td>You4</td>
<td>Again (in the past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>剛剛</td>
<td>Gang1 gang1</td>
<td>Just now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>後來</td>
<td>Hou4 lai2</td>
<td>In the end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>比</td>
<td>Bi3</td>
<td>Compared to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>比較</td>
<td>Bi3 jiao4</td>
<td>Comparatively or –er “faster”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>最</td>
<td>Zui4</td>
<td>Most or –est “fastest”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>真的</td>
<td>Zhen1 de</td>
<td>Truly, Really, True, or Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>其實</td>
<td>Qi2 shi2</td>
<td>In fact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>雖然</td>
<td>Sui1 ran2</td>
<td>Although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不過</td>
<td>Bu2 guo4</td>
<td>Never the less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>太X了</td>
<td>Tai4 X le</td>
<td>Too X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>多</td>
<td>Duo1</td>
<td>Much / many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一點</td>
<td>Yi1 dian3</td>
<td>A little bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>只</td>
<td>Zhi3</td>
<td>Only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>不夠</td>
<td>Bu2 gou4</td>
<td>Not enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>夠了</td>
<td>Gou4 le</td>
<td>Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>對</td>
<td>Dui4</td>
<td>Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>再</td>
<td>Zai4</td>
<td>Again (in the future)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 here 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?”