Unit 5

Huó dào lǎo, xué dào lǎo, hái yóu sān fēn xuébudào!
live to old-age, study to old-age, still have 3 parts [of 10] study-not-reach

*Said of a difficult course of study – like learning Chinese.*

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5.1 Tone contrasts

In reading the follow sets aloud, focus on the tones, as well as the occasional tone shifts:

a) Fēicháng mēn.  
Fēicháng máng.  
Fēicháng lēng.  
Fēicháng rè.  

b) Mēn jīle.  
Máng jīle.  
Lēng jīle.  
Rè jīle.  

Hào sīle.  
Māng-sīle.  
Lēng-sīle.  
Rè-sīle.  

Notes

a) Mēn ‘stuffy; close’; cf. mēnrè ‘muggy’

b) Sǐ ‘to die’; SV-sīle ‘SV to death’, ie ‘extremely’; perhaps more used by female speakers.

c) Hào can function as an adverb with SVs, meaning ‘very; so’.
5.2 Or

5.2.1 Vocabulary
First some pairs of words (some of which have appeared earlier), and some verbs:

**nouns**
nánde nánrén nánzí nánháizi ~ háir nǚde nǚrén nǚzí nǚháizi ~ háir  
males men man; male boys females women woman; female girls

Zhōngguó cài làiguó cài Kěkǒukēlè Bāishikēlè  
Chinese food foreign food Coca Cola Pepsi Cola

yánjiūshēng běnkēshēng kuāizi dāochā  
research-student root-categ.-student chopsticks knife and fork

**verbs**
zhāo yào qù xǐhuàn yòng děi  
look for want go [to] like; prefer use must; have to

5.2.2 The two or's
In English, ‘or’ sometimes has an inclusive meaning similar to ‘and’:

I drink tea or coffee in the morning, beer in the evening. / Good for you!  
Do you have any classes on Saturday or Sunday? / No, none.

However, ‘or’ in English also appears in ‘disjunctive questions’, where it links alternatives. In the latter case, ‘or’ can be followed by a distinct pause:

Will you have tea... or coffee? / Tea please.  
Are you in the morning class... or the afternoon? / The afternoon.

In Chinese, the two ‘ors’, the inclusive, and the disjunctive, are expressed differently. The first is expressed with huòzhě (or huòshí or simply huò). As a conjunction, it can appear between nouns – or nounphrases:

Jīntiān huòzhě míngtiān dōu xǐng.  
Today or tomorrow are both okay.

Bāishikēlè huò kěkǒukēlè dōu kēyí.  
Pepsi or Coke, either one is fine.

Wǒ zǎoshàng hē chá huòzhě kāfēi, wǎnshàng hē pǐjiǔ.  
Mornings I drink tea or coffee, evenings I drink beer!
The second ‘or’ – the alternative ‘or’, which is typically (but not exclusively) found in questions – is expressed with háishi (which in other contexts, means ‘still’). Unlike huòzhě, háishi is an adverb, so it needs to be followed by a verb (as in ii below). However, where the verb would otherwise be shì (see i below), háishi alone suffices – *háishi shì does not occur.

i. Tā shì Mèiguórén háishi Zhōngguórén? Is she American or Chinese?
   Yēxū shì Mèiguórén. Probably American.
   Shi nǐ de háishi tā de? Are [these] yours or his [shoes]?
   Dāngrán shì tā de, wǒ nǎlǐ huì yǒu zhème nánkàn de xiézi?!
   His of course, how[on earth] would I have such awful looking shoes?
   Nǐ shì běnkēshēng háishi yánjūshēng?
   Wǒ shì ěrniánjī de yánjūshēng. Are you an undergraduate or a graduate?
   Si ge háizǐ? Shi nánhái háishi nūhái?
   Dōu shì nūhái! 4 children? Are [they] boys or girls? [They] ’re all girls!

ii. Hē chá háishi hē kāfēi? [You drinking] tea or coffee?
   Chá hǎo, xièxiè. Tea’ll be fine, thanks.
   Yào chī Zhōngguó cài háishi chī wàiguó cài?
   Wǒmen zài Zhōngguó yīnggāi chī Zhōngguó cài! Do [you] want to eat Chinese food or foreign food?
   Nǐmen qù Běijīng háishi qù Shànghǎi? Are you going to Beijing or Shanghai?
   Xiān qù Běijīng. First to Beijing.
   Zhāo Wèi lāoshī háishi zhāo Zhāng láoshī?
   Zhāo Zhāng lāoshī. Are you looking for Prof. Wei or Prof. Zhang?
   Nà, chīfǎn, nǐmen xǐhuān hē pǐjiǔ háishi hē qīshuǐ?
   Wǒmen bǐjiāo xǐhuān hē chā. So, [with] a meal, do you prefer to drink beer or soda?
   Chīfǎn, nǐ píngchǎng yòng kuāizì háishi yòng dāochā?
   Zhài Zhōngguó, wǒ dāngrán yòng kuāizì, kěshì zài zhèr, píngchǎng dōu yòng dāochā. [When] eating, do you usually use chopsticks or knife and fork? In China, I use chopsticks of course, but here, I usually use a knife and fork.
Guìlín shì zài nánbiānr hái shì zài běibiānr?  
*Guìlín zài Guāngxī, zài nánbiānr.*  
Is Guilin in the south or the north?  
Guilin’s in Guangxi, in the south.

The response to an ‘or’ question may include a list of items. These may be juxtaposed, or they may be explicitly linked with huòzhē ~ huòshi ~ huò:

- Chá kāfēi dōu xíng.  
  Tea or coffee are both fine.

- Chá huòzhē kāfēi dōu xíng.  
  Either tea or coffee will be fine.

- Libāisān libāisi dōu kěyī.  
  Wednesday or Thursday are both possible.

- Libāisān huò libāisi dōu kěyī.  
  Either Wednesday or Thursday is fine.

**Exercise 1.**

*Paraphrase in Chinese:*

1. Are you in the morning class or the afternoon?
2. Are you going today or tomorrow?
3. Either Coke or Pepsi is fine – it doesn’t matter.
4. Do Koreans drink coffee…or tea in the morning?
5. Do you want to have a boy or a girl?
6. Do you prefer coffee or tea with breakfast. / Usually either is fine, but today I’m tired, [so] I’ll have coffee.
7. Are you in school, or working? I was in school, but now I’m working.

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**5.3 At the beginning of class**

To show respect, students quite naturally stand when the teacher enters and greet him or her appropriately: Wèi lǎoshī, hǎo. Then still standing, Wèi lǎoshī asks for a count off: yī, èr, sān, sì…. And the conversation under §5.3.1 below ensues. But first, some more vocabulary:

- shuāngshù  ‘even number’
- dānshù  ‘odd number’
- bànr  ‘partner; mate’
- zuò bànr  ‘act as partner’
- dàjiā  ‘everyone (large family)’
- zěnme bàn  ‘what to do (how manage)’

**Notes**

a) Shuāng means ‘a pair’, also used as an M in eg yī shuāng kuàizi ‘a pair of chopsticks’; dān ‘a unit’; shù shì shùxué de shù.

b) Bànr  ‘partner’ (a noun) is etymologically related to bànr ‘half’; however, it is not related to the homophonous bàn ‘do; manage’ (a verb), as in zěnme bàn.
5.3.1 Dialogues: At the beginning of class

**I. lāoshi**

i. Jīntiān yígòng yǒu duōshao xuéshēng?  
Jī ge nánde, jī ge núde?  
Èrshíshì shì shuāngshù hái shì dānshù?  
Dānshù hǎo hái shì shuāngshù hǎo?  
Wèishénme?

**xuéshēng**

Yǒu èrshí sì ge.  
Shì nán de, shìsì ge nú de.  
Shì shuāngshù.  
Shuāngshù hǎo.  
Yīn wèi shuāngshù, dājiā dōu yǒu bānr.

**II. lāoshi**

ii. Jīntiān yígòng yǒu duōshao xuéshēng?  
Shíjiǔ shì shuāngshù hái shì dānshù?  
Shì dānshù hǎo hái shì shuāngshù hǎo?  
Wèishénme dānshù bù hǎo.  
Nà, zěnme bàn?

> **xuéshēng**

Yǒu shíjiǔ sì ge.  
Shì dānshù.  
Shuāngshù hǎo.  
Yīn wèi shuāngshù, yí ge rén méiyǒu bānr.  
Méi guānxi, Wèi lǎoshī kěyǐ zuò bānr.

**Duōshao nánde, duōshao núde?** [JKW 1982]
5.4 Food (2)
The Unit 4 introduced staples and other basic categories of food (miàntiáo, mìfēn, tāng) and some common meats and vegetables (niúròu, xiārēn, dòufu). The next step is to try to collate these ingredients and name the dishes accordingly. Typically, this will mean combining a meat or vegetable – or both – with a basic category of food. Ordering in this way will not always result in a well formed menu item, for names can be idiosyncratic; but it should allow you to get meals with the ingredients you want while you continue to gain experience. In real life, it may be clearer to state the category first, then repeat it with the ingredients: chāomiàn, chāshāo-chāomiàn; tāng, dòufu-tāng. Recall that some of the basic food names lose syllables in combination: bāozi > chāshāobāo rather than chāshāobāozi.

The basic categories of food from Unit 4:

(a) fàn, chāomiàn, mìfēn, miàn, chāomiàn, tāng, tāngmiàn, jiāozi, bāozi, zhōu ~ xīfān

(b) zhūròu, niúròu, yángròu, yā, jǐ, jīdàn, yú, xiārēn, dòufu

Containers (M-words):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yì wàn niúròu-tāng</td>
<td>1 bowl beef soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liàng pán xiārēn-chāofān</td>
<td>2 plate shrimp fried rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yì lóng ~ yì jīn bāozi</td>
<td>1 steamer ~ 1 catty bao</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yúpiàn</td>
<td>fish slices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ròusī</td>
<td>pork shreds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiǔcài</td>
<td>shredded pork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shícài</td>
<td>white veg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>báicài</td>
<td>seasonal cabbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shùcài</td>
<td>scallions vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gālí</td>
<td>curry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chāshāo</td>
<td>roast [pork]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhájiàng</td>
<td>fried bean sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shùjiǎo</td>
<td>boiled dumplings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Models:

a) xiārēn, dòufu, tāngmiàn, yì wān ~ yī wān xiārēn-dòufu-tāngmiàn ‘bowl of shrimp beancurd noodle soup’

b) bāozi, zhūròu, jiǔcài, yī lóng ~ zhūròu-jiǔcāi-bāo<zi>, yī lóng ‘a steamer of pork scallion steamed buns’

Some typical dishes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>niúròu-miàn</td>
<td>beef noodles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ròusī-chāo-miàn</td>
<td>shredded pork and fried noodles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niúròu-tāngmiàn</td>
<td>beef noodle in soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gālí-fān</td>
<td>curry and rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jīdàn-chāo-fān</td>
<td>egg and fried rice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 2

Try ordering the following:
1. a plate of curried fried rice.
2. a bowl of congee with fish slices.
3. a plate of roast pork and noodles; another of roast pork and fried noodles.
4. 2 bowls of cabbage and shredded pork soup.
5. a plate of beef with rice-noodles.
6. a bowl of toufu soup.
7. a steamer of cabbage and lamb dumplings
8. a plate of cabbage, shrimp and rice-noodles.
9. a bowl of shrimp and noodles in soup.
10. a plate of noodles with mixed ingredients.

5.4.1 Dialogue: ordering dishes

F is a fúwùyuán (‘a waiter’); G are four customers (gùkè) having dinner. Normally, the process of figuring out what to order would involve a perfunctory examination of the menu followed by discussion with the waiter about the specialties of the house, the types of fish in stock, what vegetables are fresh, etc. These customers have already decided what they want. They order the dishes by name rather than taking the descriptive approach seen in the last section.
F. Yào chǐ shénme?  
What’ll [you] have?

G. Yào yí ge yúxiāng-qìézi,  
yí ge shāo’èrdōng,  
yí ge huìguōròu, yí ge sūshījīn,  
zài yào yí ge suānlàtāng.  
[We’ll have a ‘fish-fragrant eggplant’,  
and] a ‘cooked two-winter’; a  
‘double-cooked pork’; a ‘mixed vegetables’,  
and also a ‘hot and sour soup’.

F. Suānlàtāng nǐ yào dàwān háishi  
xiāowān?  
[For] the hot and sour soup, do you  
want a big bowl or a little bowl?

G. Dàwān duō dà?  
How big’s the big bowl?

F. Liù ge rén hē!  
[Enough] for 6 [to drink]!

G. Hǎo, yào dà de.  
Okay, a big one.

F. Hē shénme? Hē yǐnlǐào háishi  
hē pǐjiǔ?  
What’ll [you] have to drink? A beverage  
or beer?

G. Chá jiù kěyǐ. Lǜchá.  
Tea’ll be fine. Green tea.

F. Hǎo, si ge cài, yí ge tāng:  
yúxiāng-qìézi, shāo’èrdōng,  
huìguōròu, sūshījīn; dàwān  
suānlàtāng.  
Okay, 4 dishes and a soup:  
‘fish-flavor eggplant’; ‘cooked 2 winter’,  
‘double-cooked pork’; ‘mixed vegetables’  
and a large bowl of ‘hot and sour soup’.

G. Hái yào báifàn.  
And rice.

F. Dàwān ma.  
A big bowl.

G. Kěyǐ.  
That’s fine.

Notes

shāo’èrdōng  (cooked-2-winter) A vegetarian dish consisting of two winter  
vegetables such as dōnggū ‘dried mushrooms’ or dōngsūn ‘winter  
bamboo shoots’.

huìguōròu (return to-pan-pork), ie ‘double-cooked pork’

sū  plain; simple; vegetarian. Cf. chī sū ~ chī zhai ‘eat vegetarian  
food’.

shījīn  N ‘assortment of’; sūshījīn ‘assorted vegetables’
zài yào  zài ‘again’, but here, ‘in addition’.
yǐnlǐào  N ‘drink-material’ refers to non-alcoholic beverages – but not tea.
báifàn  In China, rice is often ordered by the liǎng ‘ounce’.
5.5 Expanding the V+de construction

5.5.1 Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V+O</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chàng[gē]</td>
<td>Hányū</td>
<td>English Chinese speech be proper; correct; standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing</td>
<td>xīn</td>
<td>speak; talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>zuò[fàn]</td>
<td>cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuō[huà]</td>
<td>Zhōngguó huà</td>
<td>SV biāozhūn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suōhuà</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

a) Like chàngfàn, when no other object is present or can be provided from the context, the verbs in the top row usually appear with the generic objects indicated in brackets.
b) Zuòfàn ‘cook’. In the south, zhūfăn ‘boil-food’ and shāofăn ‘heat-food’ are also used for ‘cook’.

5.5.2 Commenting on abilities

Recall the earlier examples of the V+de construction:

Nǐ shuō+de hěn hǎo. You speak very well
Nǐ jiāng+de bú cuò. You speak pretty well.

Nothing can intervene between the verb, shuō and +de, so an object has to be mentioned first, either alone, or with repetition of the verb:

Nǐ Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn biāozhūn.
Nǐ jiāng Zhōngwén, jiāng+de hǎo-jíle.
Nǐ Hányū shuō+de fēicháng hǎo.
Zhōngguó huà jiāng+de hěn biāozhūn.

The same construction can be applied to other verbs:

Hánzi xiě+de hěn hǎo. You write characters well.
Nǎlì, xiě+de bù hǎo. Nah, I don’t write well.

Tā chàng+de hěn hǎo. She sings well.
Tā chàng+de bù tài hǎo. He doesn’t sing very well.
Ta chànggē chàng+de zěnmeiyàng? How does he sing?

Wǒ zuòfăn zuò+de hěn chà. I’m a terrible cook.
Nǐ zuò+de bù cuò! You cook pretty well.

Wǒ xīhuan chànggē, dānshi chàng+de bù hǎo. I like to sing, but I don’t sing well.
5.5.3 **Hui** ‘be able’; **yidiǎn<e>** ‘a bit’
The response to someone praising your language ability is the modest:

Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ <shū+de bù hǎo>.

To this you can add a sentence with the modal verb hui ‘be able to [of learned abilities]’:

Wǒ zhǐ hui shuō yidiǎnr. I only speak a little.
Wǒ zhǐ hui shuō yidiǎndiǎn. I speak very little!

**Yidiǎnr** ‘a bit; a little’ can appear between an action verb and its object:

Wǒmen chī yidiǎnr fān, hǎo bu hāo? Let’s have a bit to eat, okay?
Hē yidiǎnr qīshuǐ ba. Have a soft drink.
Zài zhèr kěyī mǎi yidiǎnr dōngxi. You can do a bit of shopping here.

Contrast the use of yidiǎnr directly after a verb (as part of the object) with the **yǒu yidiǎnr** pattern, that precedes SVs:

\[ V \; yidiǎnr \; O \]

Hē yidiǎnr chá ba. Why don’t you have some tea.

**Subject** **yǒu yidiǎnr** **SV**

Zhè chá yǒu yidiǎnr kǔ. This tea’s a little bitter.

5.5.4 **Hui, néng (~ nénggòu), kěyī and xíng**
You have encountered a number of verbs all having to do with ability. Although usage varies between regions, particularly between the Mainland and Taiwan, the basic differences are illustrated below.

a) **hui** ‘know how to; can’, typically used for learned abilities

Wǒ bú hui jiāng Shànghǎihuà. [I] can’t speak Shanghainese.

‘know about; be good at’, ie used as a main verb

Tā hui hěn duō shāoshù mínzú de yǔyán. She speaks a lot of languages of minority peoples.
‘possibility’ (often with a final ‘emphatic-de’)

Jìntiān bù huì hěn lěng. It won’t be too cold today.
Bú huì de ba! No way!
Tāmen hui yíng de! They’re bound to win!

b) néng ~ nénggòu: ‘capable of; can’ (ranging from physical ability to permission)

Néng qù ma? Can you go?
Wǒ bù néng hē bájiǔ. I can’t drink ‘white spirits’.
Míngtiān wǒ bù néng lái shāngkè. I can’t come to class tomorrow.
Néng děng yìxià ma? Can you wait a bit?
Néng hē yì jīn, hē bā liáng…. [If] you can drink a ‘jin’ [but] only drink 8 ounces, you won’t be able to face the people, you won’t be able to face the party!

c) kěyǐ ‘all right to; can’ (ranging from possibility to permission)

Kěyǐ jīnqu ma? Can [we] go in?
Kě bu kěyǐ mài bàn ge? Can [one] buy a half?
Túshūguǎn <lǐ> bù kěyǐ shuōhuà. [You] not supposed to talk in the library.

d) xíng ‘be okay; to do; to work’

Xíng has a meaning similar to kěyǐ or néng, but its grammatical behavior is different. Xíng is not a modal verb (ie cannot be followed by another verb); it is an ordinary verb that appears in predicate position (at the foot of the sentence).

Qǐngkè chīfàn méi jiǔ bù xíng. You can’t invite guests for a meal without [having] wine.
Cf. Chīfàn bù néng méi jiǔ.

Xué Zhōngwén méiyou lǎoshī xíng ma? Can you study Chinese without a teacher?
Cf. Xué Zhōngwén méiyou lǎoshī, kěyǐ ma?

As the previous examples show, the expression bù xíng often corresponds to ‘without’ in English.

Qǐngkè chīfàn méi yú bù xíng. Having guests for a meal without [serving] fish won’t do!
Zài Měiguó chīfàn méi miànbāo bù xíng. In the US, you can’t have a meal without bread.
Zài Fǎguó chīfàn méi jiǔ bù xíng. In France, you can’t have a meal without wine.
Zài Tàiguó chīfàn méi làjiāo bù xíng.  In Thailand, you can’t have a meal without chillies.

Qù lǚxíng méi ditú bù xíng.  You can’t go traveling without a map.

Guò shēngri méi dàngāo bù xíng. You can’t have a birthday without a cake.

Kàn yùndònghuì méi píjiǔ bù xíng.  You can’t watch a sporting event without beer!

Méi jiǔ méi yú bù chéng xí. It takes wine and fish to make a feast!

[A saying: chéng xí ‘become feast’]

Exercise 3.
Paraphrase in Chinese:
1. She speaks very good Chinese.
2. I’m a lousy cook, but I love to eat Chinese food.
3. She speaks [Chinese] quite well, but she doesn’t write very well.
4. You sing well. / Nah, not so well!
5. You speak [Chinese] very well. / No, I only speak a little!
6. Have some tea. / Thanks….This is great – what kind is it?
7. I find coffee a little bitter; I prefer tea.

8. You can’t shop without money.
9. You can’t eat Chinese food without chopsticks. (kuàizi ’chopsticks’)
10. You can’t drink coffee without milk.
11. You can’t drink beer without peanuts! (huāshēng ‘peanuts’)

Xiǎo péngyou, nǐ hǎo. [JKW 1997]
5.6 Talking to children

In China, you will find yourself in situations where you have to talk to children. In the following dialogue, you strike up a conversation with the 5 year old child of some Chinese friends. You may have heard the name, but you can’t recall it, so you begin as follows:

Dà  Xiāo péngyou, nǐ hǎo.  Hi, little friend.

Xiāo  (to female) Ēyí hǎo.           Hello, auntie.
     (to male) Shūshu, hǎo.          Hello, uncle.

Dà  Xiāo péngyou chī shénme ne?  What are [you] eating?

Xiāo  Chī táng ne.                 Candy.

Dà  Háochī ma?                    Is it good?

Xiāo.  Háochī. Gēi shūshu yì kě, hāo bu hāo?  Yes. [I] ‘ll give one to uncle, okay?

Dà  O, xièxié. Xiāo péngyou xǐhuàn chànggē ma?  Ah, thank you. Do you like to sing?

Xiāo  Xǐhuan.                  I do.

Dà  Xǐhuan cháng shénme gē?  What song do you like to sing?

Xiāo  Zài xuéxiào wǒmen chàng ‘Wǒmen shì Gòngchān-zhǔyì jièbānrén’.  At school we sing ‘We’re the ones who uphold Communism!’

Dà  Èi, hāo gē! Kēyī gēi wǒ chāngchāng ma?  Hey, nice song! Can you sing it for me? (~ Kēyī chàng gēi wǒ tīngtīng ma?)

Xiāo  “Wǒmen shì Gòngchān-zhǔyì jièbānrén....”

Dà  Ng, nǐ chàng+de hěn hāo.  You sing well!

Xiāo  Chàng+de bù hāo!            No I don’t.

Dà  Háo, xiāo péngyou, zàijiàn.  Okay, goodbye.


Dà  Zhēn kě’āi!                   Cute!
Notes:

chī...ne: the final ne conveys a tone of engagement or concern that is associated with on-going actions otherwise marked with zài (cf. §4.7.4).

táng  cf. tāng ‘soup’ (‘soups stays level’, ‘sugar raises the pulse’).
kē  a M for beads, beans, pearls and even meteors and satellites.

Wōmen shi … S/he actually cites the first line. The title is ‘Zhōngguó shàonián xiānfēngduì gē’, i.e. ‘Song of the Chinese Young Pioneers’. Nowadays, children have a less interesting repertoire of songs.

-zhǔyì corresponds to English ‘ism’; zīběn-zhǔyì ‘capitalism’; kǒngbù-zhǔyì ‘terrorism’.

jiēbānrén ‘successor’, literally, ‘meet-duty-person’.

gěi  Root meaning ‘give’, but also ‘for’; cf. §5.6.1 directly below.

chàngchang  Repetition of the verb (without tone) takes the edge off the request: ‘sing a little; just sing me a bit’.

zhēn  adverb ‘really; truly’; cp. zhēn yōuyìsi ‘really interesting’ and zhēn bàng ‘really super’.

kě‘ài  ‘capable-love’; cf. kēpà ‘frightening’ and kěchǐ ‘edible’.

5.6.1 Verbs, coverbs, and serialization

jiāoshū  gàosu  mài  mài  wèn  wèntí
teach-books teat  tell  buy  sell  ask  a question
dǎ diànhuà  sòng  shì<qing>
hit telephone  present s/t to s/o;  shi<qing>
to telephone  escort s/o s/w  things [to do]

Notes

a) Jiāoshū ‘teach’, with the generic object shū present when no other object is cited; jiāoshū but jiǎo Zhōngwén ‘teach Chinese’. Contrast jiǎo ‘teach’ with the three distinct falling toned jiǎos: jiǎo ‘be named; call’, bijiǎo, shuijiǎo.

b) Wèn ‘ask a question’ but qīng ‘ask a favor’.

c) Sòng parallels gěi in meaning ‘give [as a present]’; it also means to ‘see someone off’: sòng tā qù jīchǎng. Sòng and gěi also combine in the compound verb sònggěi ‘send, present to’, illustrated in later units.

d) Dōngxi are physical things, shi<qing>, abstract ‘items of business’.

The dialogue with the child in the previous section presents an opportunity to introduce several functions (or meanings) of gěi.
a) Gěi as a main verb.
Along with a number of other verbs involving transactions, gěi can take two objects, one that refers to the ‘item’ transferred (the direct object – DO) and the other, to the person who gains it (the indirect object – IO).

| gěi  | tā    | yí ge lǐwù       | give her a present |
| sòng| tā    | yí ge lǐwù       | present him with a gift |
| jiǎo| tāmen | Zhōngwén         | teach them Chinese |
| wèn | tā    | yí ge wèntí      | ask her a question |
| gàosu| tā   | yí jiān shìqìng  | tell him something |

The same pattern is common in English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V</th>
<th>IO [person]</th>
<th>DO [thing]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>an opera mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teach</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>Chinese opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buy</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>a ticket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sell</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>your robes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the pattern should not be extended on the basis of English. For example, mǎi ‘buy’, which allows two objects in English (‘buy her a ticket’), requires a different pattern in Chinese, introduced in (c) below. There are other differences, too. In English ‘teach’ and ‘tell’ can occur with single objects, but not ‘give’; in Chinese all three can occur with a single object:

Wǒ jiāo tāmen. I teach them; I’m their teacher.
Bié gàosu tā. Don’t tell him.

But Wǒ gěi nǐ. I give [it] [to] you; it’s yours!

b) Gěi as a co-verb meaning ‘for [the benefit of]’.
In Unit 4, you encountered the phrase gěi nǐ jiēshào jiēshào ‘introduce you to’, or more literally ‘introduce [someone] for you’. The main verb is jiēshào; gěi precedes it, with the meaning ‘for your benefit’ rather than ‘give’. Similarly gěi wǒ chāngcháng in the previous dialogue involves gěi functioning as a co-verb. Here are some typical examples – notice that gěi in its CV function always precedes the main verb.

Wǒ gěi nǐ zuò ba! I’ll do it for you, okay?
Míngtiān gěi nǐ dà ge diànhuà, hǎo bu hào? [I]’ll phone you tomorrow, okay?
Wǒ gěi nǐ xiě. I’ll write it for you.
Wǒ gěi tā mái dōngxi, tā gěi wǒ zuòfàn. I shop for her, and she cooks for me.
c)  perchè as the second verb in a series.
As noted above, mǎi ‘buy’ does not permit the (a) pattern, with two objects. Instead the purpose of the transaction has to be expressed by adding a phrase introduce by ãi:

mǎi liwù ãi tā
tab present give her
tab her a present

The two verbs, mǎi and ãi, appear sequentially – ‘buy and give’ – in a relationship that is sometimes called serialization. Here is a short dialogue that contrasts the co-verb (b) and serialization patterns (c):

Jiā  Mingtiān shí tā de shēngrì;    Tomorrow’s her birthday;
wǒmen yīnggāi mǎi yì ge    we should buy her a present.
liwù ãi tā.

Yí  Mǎi shénmé liwù?   What [sort] of present?

Jiā  Tā shì wàiguó lái de; mǎi    She’s a foreigner; how about we
gē xiǎo jīnìànpīn ãi tā, buy her a small memento? (‘buy a
zènmeyàng?

Yí  Bú cuò, wǒ kěyǐ ãi nǐ mǎi!   Okay, I’ll buy [it] for you.

Serialization is quite versatile in Chinese. When the adult in dialogue §5.6 asked the child to sing the song for him, he used sentence (a) below, with a co-verb construction to indicate that he would benefit from the action (‘sing for me’); but as noted, he could also have said sentence (b), using a serialization to emphasize the purpose or result (‘sing so I hear’). In the latter case, ãi might be translated as ‘let’ or ‘allow’.

co-verb  (a) Kèyǐ ãi wǒ chāngchāng ma?   Can you sing [it] for me?
serialization  (b) Kèyǐ chāng ãi wǒ tīngtīng ma?  Can you let me hear [it]?

There are other cases in which both a co-verb construction and a serialization are possible:

co-verb  Wǒ ãi nǐ dǎ diànhuà, hǎo bu hǎo?   I’ll phone you, okay?
serialization  Wǒ dǎ diànhuà ãi nǐ, hǎo bu hǎo?  I’ll phone you, okay?
Exercise 4
Compose a Chinese conversation based on the English:

She’s leaving (lǐkāi) Hong Kong next week (xià ge xīngqì). We should give her a memento. / Yes, we should buy her something. / What do you suggest? / How about a seal [chop] (túzhāng)? She probably already has a chop. I think we should get her a fan (shànzi). / I’ve got to go to Xuānwūqū this afternoon – I’ll get you one. / Oh, that would be great – I have class from 1 to 5. / No problem, I often buy fans there.

Summary of gēi patterns

Verb  Wǒmen gēi tā yí ge lǐwù, zěnmeyàng? Let’s give her a present.
CV…V  Wǒmen gēi tā máǐ yí ge lǐwù, zěnmeyàng? Let’s buy a present for her.
V-O V-O  Wǒmen máǐ yí ge lǐwù gēi tā, zěnmeyàng? Let’s buy her a present.

5.7 Music and musicians

5.7.1 Singers, styles and other vocabulary:

gē  yi shǒu gē  gēshǒu  gēxīng  bijiào xīhuan / zuì xīhuan
song  a M song  song-hand  song-star  quite like / most like
        a song  singer  star singer  prefer
Māo Wáng  Jiākéchóng  Jiékèxùn  Pànwāluòdì  Mài Dāngnà
        cat king  armor-shell-insects  M. Jackson  Pavorotti  Madonna
yáogǔn<yuè>  xīhā  juéshì<yuè>  xiānggēn-yīnyuè
        rock ‘n roll  hiphop  jazz  country-music
gǔdiān-yīnyuè  míngē
classical music  folksongs

Notes
a) Shǒu ‘M for songs, poems’ and gēshǒu de shǒu are homophones – pronounced the same – but are different words (written with different characters).
b) Zuì ‘most’, eg: zuì dà ‘biggest’, zuì duō ‘most’, zuì nán ‘hardest’ etc.
5.7.2 Dialogue – musical preferences

Jiǎ  Nǐ zúi xīhuan shénme yàng de yīnyuè?  What kinds of music do you prefer?

Yī  Wǒ bǐjiào xīhuan yáogǔyùè hé xīhā. I prefer rock and hiphop.

Jiǎ  Néi ge gēshǒu?  Which singers?

Yī  Zhōngguó de ma?  Chinese [ones]?

Jiǎ  Shì.  Yes.

Yī  Xīhuan Zhōu Jiélún, Nà Yīng.  I like Zhou Jielun, Na Ying.

Jiǎ  Nà, Xīfāng de ne?  And Western ones?

Yī  Xīfāng de ne, zúi xīhuan Māo Wáng! Western ones, I like ‘the King’.

Jiǎ  Nà nǐ yě xīhuan juéshi ma?  Do you like jazz too?

Yī  Juéshi ne, hái kuí yī, kuìshì  Jazz, [I] quite [like it], but I don’t
wǒ bù cháng tīng, tīngbuguān.  often listen [to it], I’m not used [to it].

5.7.3 Musical instruments

Talking about music often leads to questions about playing musical instruments.
Traditional Chinese instruments include the shēng ‘a reed instrument’, the dǐ ‘flute’, the pipa ‘lute’, and various kinds of qín ‘stringed instruments’. Questions about traditional music or instruments can include the SV chuántōng ‘traditional’:

Jiǎ  Nǐ xīhuan Zhōngguó chuántōng de yīnyuè ma?  Do you like traditional Chinese music?

Yī  Nǐ shuō de shì shēng, dìzi, pipā zhèi yàngr de yīnyuè ma?  You mean (‘what you say is’) music such as the sheng [reed pipe], dizi [bamboo flute] and pipa [Chinese lute]?


Yī  Ng, hái kěyǐ. Wǒ bù cháng tīng nèi yàngr de yīnyuè!  Yeah, it’s okay. I don’t listen to that kind of music much.

Note:

a) Note that nǐ shuō de shì , literally ‘you say thing is’, corresponds to English ‘you mean…’.
Words for modern instruments are mostly based on the traditional names (though jitā is a loanword):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Chinese Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>piano</td>
<td>gāngqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violin</td>
<td>tíqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flute</td>
<td>héngdí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarinet</td>
<td>shùdǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guitar</td>
<td>jitā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metal-qin</td>
<td>tǐqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horizontal flute</td>
<td>horiz.-flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertical flute</td>
<td>vert-flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violin family</td>
<td>flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarinet</td>
<td>guitar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chinese does not have a single verb comparable to English ‘play’ that can be used for any instrument (as well as football). Instead, verbs are chosen according to the particular musical gesture: tān ‘pluck’, for plucked instruments, such as guitar and piano; là ‘pull’ for bowed instruments, such as violin or pípa; chuī ‘blow’ for wind instruments such as clarinet or bamboo flute [dízi]; etc. However, the Chinese verb huì ‘be able to [of learned abilities]’, unlike its English counterparts such as ‘can’ or ‘be able’, has the virtue of not requiring expression of the skill itself. The following sentence could, therefore, be literally translated as ‘Can I ask what instrument you are able in?’

Qǐngwèn, nǐ huì shénme yuèqì? Can I ask what musical instrument you play?

Wǒ huì tán diǎnr jitā, kěshì tán+de bú tài hǎo. I can play some guitar, but I don’t play very well.

Wǒ huì chuī lāba, dànsì chuī+de bù hǎo. I play trumpet a bit, but not well.

**Exercise 5.**
Hot lines in Kunming: Hot lines (rèxiàn), phone numbers which allow you to inquire about a subject for a small charge, are popular in China – or at least, they were in the year 2000. In the city of Kūnmíng, (zài Yúnnán), you could dial a hotline number to get an explanation of your personality based on your color preferences: those who like red, for example, are warm and enthusiastic (rèqíng) and uninhibited (běnfàng).
Other lines allowed you to select a song and have it played over the telephone. (Such lines are less common now that the novelty has worn off.) Here are some of the selections. You can make your own choice, as well as initiate a brief discussion with the operator along the following lines:

- Wéi, wǒ xiǎng tīng yì shǒu gē. Hello, I’d like to listen to a song.
- Néi ge gēxīng? Which singer?
- Wǒ yào tīng Cuǐ Jiàn de <gē>. I’d like to listen to one of Cui Jian’s.
- Cuǐ Jiàn de nǐ shǒu gē? Which one of Cui Jian’s?
- Èr líng jiǔ sān. Hǎo, #2093. Okay, #2093.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>singer</th>
<th>song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2093</td>
<td>Cuǐ Jiàn</td>
<td>男</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2094</td>
<td>Cuǐ Jiàn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2095</td>
<td>Cuǐ Jiàn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2096</td>
<td>Zhāng Xuéyǒu</td>
<td>男</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2097</td>
<td>Zhāng Xuéyǒu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2098</td>
<td>Wáng Fēi</td>
<td>女</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2099</td>
<td>Wáng Fēi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>Tián Zhèn</td>
<td>女</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2101</td>
<td>Tián Zhèn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2102</td>
<td>Kē Yīmǐn</td>
<td>女</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2103</td>
<td>Déng Lijūn</td>
<td>女</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.8 Verbs of cognition

5.8.1 Knowing
Knowledge of facts is expressed by the verb zhīdào (with the second syllable often fully toned in the negative, bù zhīdào). In southern Mandarin, xiăode is the colloquial equivalent.

Nǐ zhīdào ma?    Nǐ xiăode ma?    Do you know?
Bù zhīdào.        Bù xiăode.        [I] don’t.
Zhī bu zhīdào?    Xiăo bu xiăode? Do [you] know (or not)?

Tā wèishénme hěn jinzhāng?    Wǒ bù zhīdào ~ wǒ bù xiăode.

Knowing someone, or being acquainted with someone or something, is expressed by a different verb in Mandarin: rènshi. (The same distinction is made in the Romance languages.) Contrast the two usages in the examples below:

Tā shì bu shì Yáng Lán?    Is that Yang Lan?
Wǒ bù xiăode! Shéi shì Yáng Lán?    I don’t know. Who’s Yang Lan?

Tā shì Yáng Lán ma?    Is that Yang Lan?
Wǒ bù xiăode, wǒ bù rènshi tā.    I don’t know, I don’t know her.

Shi Zhōngguórén ma?    Is [she] Chinese?
Bù zhīdào, wǒ bù rènshi tā.    [I] don’t know, I don’t know her.

[Yáng Lán used to work for CCTV as a newscaster; she came to the US to attend graduate school at Columbia University, then returned to China to become an immensely popular talk show host.]

5.8.2 Understanding
a) Dǒng ‘understand’

Dǒng ma?    Dǒng.
Dǒng bu dǒng?    Duìbuqǐ, wǒ bù dǒng.

Another word, míngbai, composed of míng ‘bright’ (also seen in míngtiān) and bái ‘white’, means ‘understand’ in the sense of ‘to get it’. Because ‘understanding’ often comes as a breakthrough, both dǒng and míngbai are associated with the ‘new situation’ le.

i) Dǒng le ma?    Dǒng le.    I understand [now].
Chābuduō le!    Just about.
Jībēnshāng dǒng le!    Basically, I do.
Duìbuqǐ, hāishi bù dǒng!    Sorry, I still don’t get it.
ii) Míngbai ma?  
Míngbai le!  
[Now] I get it!

iii) Nǐ dǒng wǒ de yìsi ma?  
/  
Dǒng.  
Do you understand ‘my meaning’?  
/  
I do.

b) Kàndedǒng

The dialogue in Unit 4 began with the question in which the verbs kàn ‘look; read’ and dǒng ‘understand’ are combined in a phrase mediated by de (which turns out to be written +de ‘so as to; get’, ie 得): Nǐ kàndedǒng ma? A positive response would be kàndedǒng; a negative one, kànbudǒng. Tīng ‘listen’ may substitute for kàn if the stimulus is aural rather than visual (see chart below).  

The relationship between the two verbs is one of action (kàn) and result (dǒng). The presence of the internal de or bu makes the construction ‘potential’ rather than ‘actual’, so the translation of kàndedǒng is not just ‘understand’ but ‘manage to understand’; similarly, kànbudǒng is ‘not succeed in understanding’. The complete paradigm is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actual</td>
<td>Kàndǒng le.</td>
<td>Méi kàndǒng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tīngǒng le.</td>
<td>Méi tīngǒng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential</td>
<td>Kàndedǒng.</td>
<td>Kànbudǒng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tīngedǒng.</td>
<td>Tīngbudǒng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[I] understood [it].</td>
<td>[I] didn’t understand [it].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[I]’m able to understand [it].</td>
<td>[I]’m not able to understand [it].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other examples of the potential construction encountered in earlier units include:

duibuqǐ ‘sorry (not worthy of facing)’
shuāibudāo ‘manage not to fall down’
chideguàn ‘be in the habit of eating’
chībuguàn ‘not be in the habit of eating’
tīngbuguàn ‘not be in the habit of listening [to it]’
xuèbudāo ‘not manage to learn it’

5.8.3 Reporting on questions

Verbs such as zhīdao, as well as wèn ‘ask’, are often used to report on questions. In English, this has some interesting grammatical consequences, as shown below:

**Direct speech (schematic)**

I asked: “Where are you going?”  
>  
I asked where you were going.

We don’t know: “Is he Chinese?”  
>  
We don’t know whether/if he’s Chinese [or not].

I don’t know: “Why is she so nervous?”  
>  
I don’t know why she’s so nervous.
In English, reporting speech involves grammatical features such as ‘agreement of tenses’ (‘were going,’ not ‘are going’ in the first example), non-question word order (‘where you were going’ rather than ‘where were you going’) and insertion of ‘if’ or ‘whether’ in yes-no questions. Chinese, fortunately, does not require such contortions, as the following examples show.

**a) Zhīdào**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct speech</th>
<th>Reported speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ bù zhīdào: “Tā wèishénme hěn jinzhāng?”</td>
<td>Wǒ bù zhīdào tā wèishénme hěn jinzhāng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know: “Why is he so nervous?”</td>
<td>I don’t know why he’s so nervous.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is one constraint that needs to be noted, however: if the embedded question is a yes-no question, then it must have the V-not-V form; it cannot be a ma-question. The reason for this is that ma functions like the rising question intonation in English – it envelopes the whole sentence, not just a part of it. Some examples will make this clear:


We don’t know: “Is she Chinese?” > We don’t know if she’s Chinese (or not).

Notice that the reported speech, the object of zhīdào, always contains a question-form, such as shénme, or a V-not-V question.

There are times when ma does show up at the end of the sentence, but if it does, it goes with the ‘higher verb’, zhīdào, not with the internal question:

Nǐ zhī bu zhīdào {tā shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén}.

or

Nǐ zhīdào {tā shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén} ma?

**b) Wèn ‘ask [a question]’**

Wèn occurs in expressions such as qīngwèn ‘may [I] ask; excuse me’ and wèntí ‘question; problem’. (Yǒu wèntí ma?) The root meaning of wèn is ‘ask [a question]’. Questions embedded after wèn have the same constraints as those after zhīdào, eg requiring the V-not-V form with yes-no questions:

Tā wèn wǒ: “Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén ma?” > Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén.

Tā wèn wǒ: “Nǐ shì shénme difang rén?” > Tā wèn wǒ shì shénme difang rén.
Notice that Chinese does not require repetition of the pronoun in a sentence like the last: ‘He asked me if I were Chinese’ (with both ‘me’ and ‘I’ in the English) is usually expressed as: Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén (with only one wǒ).

**Exercise 6.**

*a) Translate the following:*

1. Wǒ bù zhídào tā de yàoshì zài nàr.
2. Tā wèn wǒ yǒu méiyǒu hùzhào.
3. Wǒ bù xiàoode tā de guójí shénme.
4. Tāmen wèn wǒ xǐ bǔ xǐhuān Shìjiè Běi.
5. Tā wèn wǒ jǐ diǎn chǐ zàodiàn.
6. Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì běnkēshēng.

*b) How would you say the following in Chinese? Recall that shì bu shì ‘is it the case that’ is often used to question certain assumptions.*

1. Do you know who Bǎoyù is? / Sorry, I don’t.
2. I don’t know whether Bǎoyù is hungry (or not).
3. Do you know why Bǎoyù is nervous?
4. He’s nervous because he’s going to see Dàiyù.
5. Do you know if Bǎoyù likes [ài] Dàiyù?
6. We don’t know what Bǎoyù’s surname is.

*[Jiǎ Bǎoyù and Lín Dàiyù are, respectively, male and female characters in the Chinese classic novel Hóng Lóu Mèng ‘Dream of the Red Chamber’.]*

---

### 5.9 Destination

#### 5.9.1 Going places: some vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>huījiā</td>
<td>huījiā</td>
<td>return home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chéng lǐ</td>
<td>chéng lǐ</td>
<td>in town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiāngxiàn</td>
<td>xiāngxiàn</td>
<td>the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wàiguó</td>
<td>wàiguó</td>
<td>abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jīchāng</td>
<td>jīchāng</td>
<td>airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cháng Chéng</td>
<td>Cháng Chéng</td>
<td>Great Wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.9.2 Where to?

Destination may be expressed directly (i) after the motion verbs, lái ‘come’ and qù ‘go’: lái Běijīng ‘come to Beijing’; qù Běijīng ‘go to Beijing’. The same meaning can also be expressed prepositionally (ii), with the destination placed before lái or qù (both usually untoned) as the object of dào ‘to’, or in some cases, shàng ‘on’. So the options are as follows:

1. Nǐmen qù nǎr ~ nǎlǐ? Where are you going?
2. Wǒmen qù Běijīng. We’re going to Beijing.
ii.  Nǐmen dào nǎr ~ nǎlǐ qu?  
    Wǒmen dào Běijīng qu.

Nǐmen shàng nǎr ~ nǎlǐ qu?  
    Wǒmen shàng Běijīng qu.

Though there may be stylistic reasons for choosing the direct pattern over the prepositional, the two patterns are essentially synonymous. The direct pattern accords with the order of verb and destination in regional languages such as Cantonese and Hokkien and for that reason, is preferred by southern speakers (including Taiwanese). Of the two prepositional options, the shàng…qu pattern seems to carry a special nuance of ‘setting off for some place’ so it may be more common in the question than in the answer.

Other examples

Tāmen qù shénme difang?  
   Whereabouts are they going to?

Wǒmen dào chéng lǐ qu.  
   We’re going into town.

Wǒmen shàng jīchǎng qu –  
   jiē péngyou.  
   We’re off to the airport –  
   to meet some friends.

Wǒmen huíjiā.  
   We’re going home.

Notice that ‘go home’ is not expressed with qù but with huí ‘return’, huíjiā:

Jīntiān jī diǎn huíjiā?  
   What time are you going home today?

5.9.3 Going

Both qù and zǒu can be translated as ‘go’. They differ in that zǒu cannot take a specific object; qù can. Zǒu can often be translated as ‘leave’.

Wǒ gāi zǒu le.  
   I should be off.

but  
Wǒ bāyuè sānhào qù Běijīng.  
   I’m going to Beijing on August 8th.

To leave a place can be expressed by the verb, líkāi (with the first syllable identified with the lì associated with jǐn or yuǎn):

Wǒmen míngtiān líkāi Běijīng,  
   We’re leaving Beijing tomorrow and going 
   qù Chángchūn.

5.9.4 Nǎr ~ nǎlǐ as an indefinite

Like shénme, nǎr ~ nǎlǐ can also serve as an indefinite – in either the direct pattern, or the prepositional:
Nǐ qù nǎr ~ nǎlǐ?  Where are you going?
Wǒ bú qù nǎr ~ nǎlǐ.  I’m not going anywhere (in particular).

Nǐ dào nǎr ~ nǎlǐ qù?  Where are you going?
Wǒ bú dào nǎr ~ nǎlǐ qù.  I’m not going anywhere (in particular).

5.9.5 Destination with other verbs.
With the verbs lái and qù, the destination either follows the verb immediately without any mediation (qù Běijīng), or it is governed by dào ‘to’ and placed before the verb (dào Běijīng qù). However, with other motion verbs, such as bān ‘move [one’s home]’, zǒu in its meaning of ‘walk’, pāo ‘run’, kāi ‘drive’, destination is placed after the verb, mediated by dào ‘to; towards’ (and sometimes followed ultimately by a toneless lai or qu to indicate direction to or away from the speaker):

Wŏmen bāyuè bān dào Tiānjīn <qu>.  In August, we’re moving to Tiānjīn.

Bù néng kāi dào Guīlín, tài yuǎn.  [You] can’t drive to Guīlín, it’s too far.

Nǐmen pāo dào nǎr <qu>?  Where are you running to?

The saying at the beginning of this unit also fits the pattern: Huó dào lǎo, xué dào lǎo ‘[If] you live till old age, [and] study till old age’. However, the last part of the saying, xuèbudào, uses dào to express success (in the sense of reaching a goal), a function of dào that be will discussed in a later unit.

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lái and qù</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>qù nǎr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qù chéng lǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lái Běijīng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not lái or qù (primarily)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>generic [non-spec.] object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bānjiā ‘moving’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāichē ‘driving’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huíjiā ‘going home’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.9.6 Specifying a time
With a comment about destination, you can mention a specific time, either a day of the week, or a date. Recall the placement of time words – before or after the subject (if present), but always before their associated verb:

- Nǐ xiànzái qù shénme difang? Wǒ xiànzái qù shàngkè.
  Where are you going now? I’m going to class now.

- Bāyuè sān hào wǒ qù Běijīng; wǔ hào qù Shànghǎi.
  I’m going to Beijing on Aug. 3rd; and to Shanghai on the 5th.

- Wǒmen shíyuèfen bānjīā.
  We’re moving house in October.

- Bān dào náli?
  Where are you moving to?

- Wǒmen bān dào Dōngchéng.
  We’re moving to ‘East Town’.

- Sān hào likāi Zhēnjiāng, wǔ hào dào Lǐjiāng.
  [We]’re leaving Zhenjiang [in Jiangsu] on the 3rd, and [we]’ll get to Lijiang [in Yunnan] on the 5th.

- Wǒ shēng zai Shēnzhèn, zài nán biānr, kěshí shì jīu suí wǒ bān dào Bēijīng lai le, xiànzái zhù zai Bēijīng.
  I was born in Shenzhen, in the south, but at 19, I moved here to Beijing, and now I live in Beijing.

5.9.7 Inserting foreign words
Particularly in the early stages of studying Chinese, it is acceptable to insert English nouns into your conversation: Wǒ qù library / cafeteria / airport, etc. Foreign verbs, however, resist insertion into Chinese; instead they are recast as nouns attached to a general Chinese verb such as zuò ‘do; make’. So ‘reserve’ might appear as zuò yī ge reservation. The main thing is to establish your credentials by producing the grammatical framework of the sentence – which includes the verb - with confidence.

Exercise 7.
A) Explain that:
- they’ve gone home.
- they’ve already left Beijing.
- they’re moving to the countryside.
- they’re going abroad.
- they’re going to the airport to meet someone.
- you should be leaving, it’s late.
- you’re not going anywhere this evening because you’re so tired.
- you’re driving to the airport this afternoon – to meet your classmates.
- they’ll leave Chéngdū on the 8th and get to Lìjiāng the next day (dì-èr tiān).
- you were born in Chicago, but you moved to Paris at the age of 12.
5.10 Purpose

5.10.1 Kàn ‘look at’
The verb kàn, whose root meaning is ‘look at’, may, in combination with different objects, show a wide range of English translations:

- kànshū: to read
- kàn báo: read the newspaper
- kàn diànyǐng: see a movie
- kàn diànshì: watch TV
- kàn Hóng Lóu Mèng: to read The Dream of the Red Chamber
- kàn péngyou: visit friends
- kàn qīnqī: visit relatives
- kàn dítú: look at a map
- kàn bìng: see a doctor; see a patient (look+at-illness)
- kàn rènao: go where the excitement is (look+at-hubbub)

5.10.2 Other things to do

- mǎidōngxi: shop (‘buy things’)
- zuò gōngkè: do homework
- qǔ yīfū: pick up [one’s] clothes (‘get; fetch-clothes’)
- kāihuì: hold / attend a meeting; conference (‘open-meeting’)
- gōngzuò: to work [also N ‘a job’]
- gànhuór: to do things
- zuò shìqìng: do things
- duànlài: to exercise; workout; train
- yùndòng: to exercise; do sports
- zuò yùndòng: do sports

5.10.3 Reasons for going somewhere
The verb qù, with or without an explicit destination, may be followed by an expression of purpose; if the destination is present, then it precedes the purpose (as it does in English):

- Wǒmen qù <Běijīng> kàn péngyou. We’re going <to Beijing> to visit friends.
- Tā qù <túshūguǎn> zuò gōngkè. He’s going <to the library> to do his hwk.

Purpose can be questioned by zuò shénme, gàn shénme, gānmá, all literally ‘do what’; the particle, ne, associated with close engagement, may also appear:

- Nǐ qù túshūguǎn zuò shénme <ne>?
- Nǐ qù túshūguǎn gàn shénme <ne>?
- Nǐ qù túshūguǎn gānmá <ne>?
The verb 一般, common as the ordinary word for ‘do; make’ in northern China, is avoided in polite circles in Taiwan and overseas communities because of sexual overtones. 一般 often carries overtones of disbelief, particularly when followed by ne: 一般 ne? ‘What [on earth] are [you] doing?’ A safe strategy is to use 做 what but be prepared to hear other options.

5.10.4 一般 and purpose
In purpose clauses, the verb 一般 ‘go’ may be repeated at, or postponed to the end of the sentence (where it is usually toneless).

Tā qù mǎi dōngxi.  She’s going shopping.
Tā qù mǎi dōngxi qu.
Tā mǎi dōngxi qu.

Qù kàn péngyou.  [He]’s going to see a friend.
Qù kàn péngyou qu.
Kàn péngyou qu.

Wǒ qù shàngkè.  I’m going to class.
Wǒ qù shàngkè qu.
Wǒ shàngkè qu.

Tā qù chéng lǐ mǎi dōngxi qu.  She’s going into town to shop.
Wǒmen qù Sūzhōu kàn péngyou qu.  We’re going to Suzhou to visit friends.

5.10.5 Intention
You can assert your intention or resolution to go somewhere (or do something) with the following verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>想 xiǎng</td>
<td>xiǎng</td>
<td>think &gt; feel like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>想 xiǎng</td>
<td>xiǎng</td>
<td>plan; intend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>决定 juédìng</td>
<td>juédìng</td>
<td>decide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Usage

Q
Nǐ yào qù nǎr?
qù nǎlǐ qu?
qù shénme difang?
dào nǎlǐ qu le?

A
Wǒmen bāyuè dăsuàn qù Shànghǎi mǎi dōngxi.  In August, we’re going shopping in Shanghai.

Wǒ yào dào Lúndūn qu kàn qīnqī.  I want to go to London to visit [my] relatives.
Xiàwǔ, tāmen dāsuàn qù chéng lǐ mài liwù gèi yéye. They’re planning to go into town this afternoon to buy [their] uncle a present.

Shí diǎn wǒ děi qù bàngōngshì kàn làoshì. At 10, I have to go to the office to see [my] teacher.

Kèyǐ qù lóushàng zhǎo Chén làoshì. [You] can go upstairs and look for Prof. Chen.

Zámen qù wàitou kàn fēijī ba! Let’s go out and look at the airplanes.

Tāmen juédìng qù Tàiwān kàn qīnqi. They’ve decided to go to Taiwan to visit relatives.

Hěn duō rén dōu xiǎng qù Xiāng Gǎng zhǎo gōngzuò. Lots of people would like to go to HK to find work.

**Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>intention</th>
<th>destination</th>
<th>purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Wōmen  | dāsuàn    | qù chéng lǐ dào chéng lǐ qu | mài dòngxi | <qu>.
| Tāmen  | xiǎng    | qù tǔshǔguǎn dào tǔshǔguǎn qu | kàn bào | <qu>.
| Tāmen  | juédìng  | bān dào Bēijīng qu shǎng dāxué | shǎng dāxué | <qu> le.

**5.11 In the past**

**5.11.1 Not having done something [yet]**

As seen earlier, the non-occurrence of particular events scheduled or expected is regularly indicated by méi<you> before the verb:

I haven’t washed yet.            Wō hái méi xǐzǎo.
They haven’t left yet.          Tāmen hái méi zǒu ne.
They haven’t left Beijing yet.   Tāmen hái méi líkāi Bēijīng.
They haven’t reached Shanghai yet.    Tāmen hái méi dào Shànghǎi.
I haven’t read today’s paper yet. Hái méi kàn jīntiān de báo.

I didn’t read the World Cup report. Méi kàn Shìjiè Bēi de xiǎoxi.
They haven’t arrived [here] yet. Tāmen hái méi lái ne.
They didn’t go to Beijing.       Tāmen méi qù Bēijīng.
They haven’t decided yet.        Tāmen hái méi juédìng ne.
They haven’t gone home yet.      Tāmen hái méi huíjiā.
The negative with méiyou is generally only applicable to action verbs. Verbs such as juéde ‘feel’, zhīdào ‘know’, yào ‘want’, which express emotional or cognitive states, do not normally occur with preceding méi<you>. Whether a present or a past tense is appropriate for the English translation of such cases has to depend on context.

Wǒ zuòtiān bù shūfú – wǒ méi qù. I didn’t feel well yesterday – I didn’t go.

Zuòtiān méi qù ma?  Did you go yesterday?  
Méi qù, tài yuǎn, bù xiǎng qù nàme yuǎn. No, I didn’t, it was too far; I didn’t want to go so far.

Qùnián, wǒ bù rènshi tā; wǒ yě bù zhǐdào tā gēgē shéi. Last year, I didn’t know her; nor did I know who her brother was.

5.11.2 The position of le
Reporting the occurrence of an event, ie the positive version of sentences such as those cited above with méiyou, has also been shown in many earlier examples to involve the presence of le at the foot of the sentence:

Zhōumò nǐmen qù nǎlí le?  Where did you go over the weekend?
Wǒmen qù Chántíng Chéng le.  We went to the Great Wall.

Jīntiān shànwǔ nǐ dào nǎlí qu le?  Where did you go this morning?
Wǒmen dào chéng lǐ qù mǎi dōngxí qu le.  We went shopping in town.

However, le is not always sentence final. Under certain conditions, it is also found between an action verb and its object, where it underscores the completion of the action. The most concrete manifestation of this meaning is found in sequences where the second event is conditional on the completion of the first:

Nǐ jǐ diǎn huíjiā?  When are you going home?
Wǒ chī-le fàn jiū huí jiā.  I’m going home after [I] eat.

Shénme shíhou mǎi piào?  When do we buy our tickets?
Shàng-le chē jiù mǎi piào.  Buy your tickets after boarding.

Another manifestation involves the presence of what is often called a ‘quantified object’ after the verb. A quantified object is one containing a number and measure phrase, such as liǎng ge, or as below, yí tàng ‘a trip’. In such cases, if le is present, it will be placed after the verb and before the quantified object, not at the foot of the sentence.
Zhōumò nǐmen qù nǎlǐ le? Where did you go over the weekend?

Wǒmen qù Cháng Chéng le. We went to the Great Wall.
Wǒmen qù-le yì tàng Cháng Chéng. We took a trip to the Great Wall.

The difference in the meaning of the two options is subtle; but the grammatical choice is clear: if you choose yí tàng in your response, le follows the verb, if you do not – and if le appears – then it will be placed at the foot of the sentence. This quantified object rule is important, and you should retain it for future reference. However, at this point, you will not be burdened with examples in which le is placed between verb and object; the examples in this lesson can be expressed quite naturally without use of measure phrases that constitute quantified objects.

5.11.3 More time expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last year</th>
<th>Last month</th>
<th>Last week</th>
<th>Weekend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>qùnián</td>
<td>shàng ge yuè</td>
<td>shàng ge xīnqì</td>
<td>zhōumò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jǐnnián</td>
<td>zhèi ge yuè</td>
<td>zhèi ge lǐbài</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>míngnián</td>
<td>xià ge yuè</td>
<td>xià ge xīngqī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.11.4 More examples of final le

Zuótiān shàng nǎr qu le? Where’d you go yesterday?

Shàng ge yuè, wǒmen dào
Shànghǎi qù kàn shūshū qu le.

Zhōumò dào nǎlǐ qu le? Where’d you go over the weekend?

Xīngqīliù wǒmen qù chéng lǐ mái
shǒuji qu le. Xīngqītiān qù jīcháng
jiē péngyou le.

Hùzhào yǐjīng qù le ma?
Yǐjīng qù le. Have you already picked up your passport?
Yes, I have. [Note qù vs qū.]

Zuótiān méiyǒu kè, dào nǎr qù le?
Méi dào nǎr qù, wǒmen zài jiā lǐ
zuò gōngkè ne. No class yesterday, where’d you go?
Didn’t go anywhere, we stayed at home
and did homework.
The last sentence, in particular, serves to remind us that le, although associated with events that have happened, is not a past tense marker.

**Exercise 8.**

a) Translate

1. On the weekend, we’re going to visit the Great Wall; it’s not far from Beijing.
2. No class tomorrow; we’ve decided to go to the country to visit Mǎ Róng’s uncle.
3. Don’t forget your keys. / My keys, I already have; but I don’t know where my umbrella is.
4. Where have they gone? / They’ve gone upstairs to look for a phone.
5. I haven’t gone to get my visa (qiānzhèng) yet; I’m planning to go tomorrow.

b) Provide biographical information containing all or some of the following information:

- place of birth; place where you grew up; age when you moved to another place;
- where you live now; which university you are attending; which level; etc.

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### 5.12 And

There is considerable disparity in the way English and Chinese express *coordination*. English makes broader use of coordinating conjunctions, such as ‘and’; Chinese often uses the equivalent of ‘and’ in a narrower range of grammatical contexts, and even there, may leave the coordination unmarked.

- History and mathematics are both tough!
- I don’t drink coffee or beer, just tea.

Explicit coordination is expressed with gèn (with a range of meaning that includes ‘heel; follow; with; and’) or hé (often pronounced, non-standardly, hàn by people from Taiwan). Both are only used to join nouns, pronouns, or more generally, phrases:

- Dālǐ gèn Lìjiāng dōu zài Yúnnán de xīběi. Dali and Lijiang are both in the northwest of Yunnan.
- Míngtiān qù chéng lǐ kàn Wáng láoshī hé tā de xuéshēng. Tomorrow [I]’m going into town to see Professor Wang and her students.
- Nánde gèn nǚde dōu shuō+de hěn hǎo. The males and females all speak [it] well.
- Lǎoshī, fǔmǔ gèn xuéshēng dōu děi qù. Teachers, parents and students all have to go [there].
Regardless of whether a conjunction is present or not, Chinese tends to use the adverb **dōu** to support coordination. **Dōu** does occasionally anticipate upcoming material, but much more often it refers ‘back’ to support already mentioned or implied material, which accounts for the order in the sentence: **Kāfēi pǐjū wǒ dōu bù hē**.

**Gēn** and **hé** are not even optional in settings that involve verbs or clauses, such as those illustrated below. If marked at all, such connections are indicated by adverbs such as **yě**:

- The students are nervous, and so are the teachers.  
  Xuēshēng hěn jīnzhāng, lǎoshī yě hěn jīnzhāng.

- They’re going to Beijing to visit friends and shop.  
  Tāmen qù Bēijīng kàn péngyou mǎi dōngxi.

You should, therefore, be careful not to take your cue from English ‘and’. Here are some other examples where ‘and’ in English has no direct counterpart in the Chinese:

- [I]’m fine – and you?  
  Hái hǎo; nǐ ne?

- There are telephones next door and upstairs.  
  Gébì yǒu diànhuà, lóushàng yě yǒu.

- I eat breakfast at 7 and start work at 8:00.  
  Wǒ qǐ diǎn chī záodiàn, bā diǎn shàngbān.

### 5.13 Sports and scores

Pingpong, badminton, football (local clubs as well as European and other international clubs), basketball (Chinese and NBA), swimming, and track and field (particularly during the run up to the Olympics) are popular sports in China. If you choose your topics carefully, you can at least inquire about scores. More names of sports and related conversational material appear in later units.

Begin with the verbs **yíng** ‘win’ and **shū** ‘lose’; in order to avoid complications, we use them in only in the simplest of sentences, as shown. The final **le** indicates that the contest has already taken place.

- Zhōngguó yíng le.  China won.
- Bāxī shū le.  Brazil lost.

#### 5.13.1 Scores

Scores are indicated with **bǐ** ‘compare; than; to’: thus a basketball score might be **99 bǐ 98**; football **2 bǐ 0**. The scores of low scoring sports can be questioned with **jǐ** ‘how many’: **jǐ bǐ jǐ**; high scoring games with **duōshào**: **duōshào bǐ duōshào**. Finally, a simple way to mention the two relevant teams is to list them, separated by the conjunctions **hé** or **gēn** ‘and’:

- Zhōngguó hé Bāxī, shéi yíng le?  China and Brazil, who won?
- Riběn hé Tàiguó, Tàiguó shū le.  Japan and Thailand, Thailand lost.
**Exercise 9.**

a) **Translate:**
1. How about the US and Mexico, who won?
4. What was the score? / 98 - 92. Boston won. Boston’s pretty good (‘strong!’)
5. 95 to what? / I’m not sure.
6. In pingpong [pīngpángqiú], China’s #1; the US is #1 in basketball [lánqiú].

b) **Translate:**
1. The tests are hard, and there’s lots of homework.
2. I’m taking 5 courses and they’re all hard!
3. Today’s class has 12 men and 12 women in.
4. Who won the Japan and Korea [match]? (Ribèn ‘Japan’, Hánguó ‘Korea’)
5. The library and cafeteria are air-conditioned, (yǒu kōngtiáo), so we like to study there.

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**5.14 Dialogue: Who won?**

Zhōu Shuǎng *is a man in his 40s who works in the foreign student office;* Zhāng Yīng *is the Chinese name of a younger women, an undergraduate from abroad who has been studying at the university for a year. They run into each other just outside the cafeteria.*

Zhāng. Zhōu làoshī, nín hǎo. ‘Teacher’ Zhou, how are you?

Zhōu. Ei, Zhāng Yīng, nǐ hǎo. Ni zài lìtōu a! Ah, Zhang Ying, how are you? You were inside!

Zhāng. Shi a, gāng chīwán fān. Yes, we just finished.

Zhōu. Xiànzài shàng nǎr qu a? Where are you off to right now?

Zhāng. Túshūguàn. [To the] library.


Zhāng. Bú shì zuò gōngkè qu, shì kàn bào qu. Not to do my homework, to read the paper.

Zhōu. O, kàn bào qu! Oh, to read the paper!

Zhāng. Shi, tūshūguǎn yǒu kōngtiáo, bǐjiào shūfù. Yeah, there’s airconditioning in the library, it’s quite comfortable.

Zhōu. Ng, jǐntiān shì hěn rè! Yes, it IS hot, today!
学习汉语：基础汉语课程

张。很热，也很闷。

周。中文报纸能看懂吗？

张。能看懂一些。我能看懂世界杯，没问题！

周。哦，世界杯。今天是中韩，昨天看了吗？

张。看了，当然看了。

周。太可惜了，中国队输了！

张。恩，太可惜了。不过中国队还不错！

周。今天，是英格兰和阿根廷，对吧？

张。对，英格兰赢了。

周。是吗？结果怎么样？

张。一比零。

周。嘿，不错，英格兰挺强的。

张。他们不错，但是巴西更好，我觉得。

周。英格兰和巴西下周对吧？

张。下周二。

周。明天是星期六，没有课，你打算去哪里？

张。明天不去任何地方，可能就在家里打发时间。

周。你有天津的朋友吗？

张。天津也有朋友。

周。哦，天津的朋友。

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Zhāng. Shi a, tā zài Nánkāi Dàxué dúshū. Yes, she’s studying at Nankai University.

Zhōu. Wàiguó lái de ma? Is [she] foreign?

Zhāng. Jiānándà rén; Duōlúnduō lái de. [She]’s Canadian; from Toronto.

Zhōu. Tā yè huì shuō Hányǔ ma? She speaks Chinese too?

Zhāng. Tā Hányǔ shuō+de hěn bù cuó. Her Chinese isn’t bad!

Zhōu. Kāichē qu ma? Are you driving [there]?

Zhāng Bù, zuò huǒchē qu…. No, I’m taking the train.
Háo, Zhōu lào shī, wǒ děi cóng zhèi biānr zōu le. Okay, Prof. Zhōu, I’ve got to go this way.

Zhōu. Hǎo, Zhāng Yīng, màn zǒu a! Okay, Zhang Ying, take it easy!

Notes

gāng ADV ‘just’; gāng dào ‘just arrived’; Tā gāng chīguo wǎn fān.
chīwán wán ‘finish’ may follow almost any action verb: shuōwán le; xiēwán le; hái méi kāowán ne.
kēxī ‘a pity (able-pity)’
xià cì cì ‘time’ is a verbal measure; cf. zài shuō yí cì ‘say it again’.
qiáng SV ‘strong; powerful; better’
xīūxī V ‘rest’, often reiterated as xīūxī xīūxī.
kāichē qu with kāiche acting as an adverbial, ‘go driving’; cf. zǒulù qu.
zuò huǒchē zuò ‘sit’ corresponding to English ‘take’; cf. zuò fēijī qu.
cóng … zōu ‘to go this way’ is expressed with cóng in Chinese.

Exercise 10.

Explain that:
1. you are going to Beijing to visit friends.
2. you are not going anywhere tomorrow – you have a lot of homework.
3. you’re off to class – Chinese class.
4. you have to go and pick up your [clean] clothes now.
5. you don’t know what date they’re going to China.
6. that’s yesterday’s [paper], today’s is over here.
7. his wife’s luggage is still on the plane.
8. you’re going there to fetch the luggage.
9. your teacher’s outside.
10. you have lots of friends but they don’t understand Chinese.
5.15 Pronunciation

5.15.1 Final-r in standard Mandarin
A very few words in standard Mandarin always occur with an r-final:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>érzi</td>
<td>‘child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ěr</td>
<td>‘two’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ěrduō</td>
<td>‘ear’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, a large number of words occur with a suffix ‘r’ in the speech of Beijing and other parts of the northern Mandarin speaking area. Most of these are nouns: kòngr ‘spare time’; píngr ‘bottle’, wányīr ‘toys’, diányīngr ‘films’, měnkǒur ‘doorway’, xīnyānr ‘heart; cleverness’, wēizuǐr ‘a bib’, xīngrēnr ‘almonds’, etc. The suffix appears with a few non-nouns as well: shūnshōur ‘easily; without problem’ and wānr ‘have fun’.

One historical source for this, though probably not the only one, is suggested by the writing system, which writes the r-suffix with the ěr of érzi ‘son’ (儿/ㄜ). Supposedly, ěr was originally attached to nouns in certain contexts as a ‘diminutive’, or expression of ‘familiarity’, but with time, it came to have a much more abstract meaning, ultimately ending up as little more than a marker of familiar nouns. As noted above, very few verbs appear with the r-suffix.

In some cases, the forms with and without -r (which may also show a tonal shift) have distinct though relatable meanings.
Southern speakers of Mandarin, who often regard the r-suffix as a northern affectation, can, and do, avoid using it: instead of  yìdiăn ‘a bit’ they will say yìdiăn, instead of kòng ‘free time’ they will say kòng, relying on only the tone (and context) to distinguish it from the level-toned kōng ‘empty’. In reading, they will often treat the r-suffix as a separate syllable, reading mén-ér, for example, instead of ménr [mér].

a) Other cases of final-r

All the words cited above can be found with the r-pronunciation indicated in dictionaries; and for Beijing and other northern speakers, these r-pronunciations are standard. But not all r-usage can be considered standard. Some speakers in the Beijing region and in other parts of the north lard their speech with r’s. The following nursery rhyme – rather dated to be sure – in which every last word has the r-suffix, illustrates. [This rhyme is found in Chen Zishi, compiler, Beiping Tongyao Xuanji, Taibei: Da Zhongguo Guoshu Gongsi, 1969, p. 94.]

Qióng tàitair
Bàozhe ge jiân, clutches [her] shoulders
chīwán le fân, eat-finish LE food
rào le ge wânr, go+round LE the corner
yòu măi bîngláng yòu măi yānr. and buy betel and tobacco.

Note
Bîngláng (derived from the Indonesian/Malay word pinang) is the areca nut, the main ingredient in chewable betel quids that are popular in Taiwan, south China, and in Southeast Asia. Chewing betel cleans the teeth, helps with digestion, and provides a pleasant sensation in the mouth and head. It also makes your saliva red and viscous – and leads to excess expectoration.

b) Pronunciation

You will have observed that some of the r-words look quite unpronounceable, particularly those ending in ‘nr’ or ‘ngr’ (yìdiăn, yìngr). It turns out they are not pronounced ‘as written’. As you already know, yìdiän is actually pronounced yìdiăn; similarly, pîng is pronounced pîng [pyûhr]. The pinyin convention is to leave the syllables to which the ‘r’ is added, intact. In that way, the original syllable can be easily identified, and both r and r-less versions can be listed together in a dictionary.

It would be difficult at this early stage to present all possible r-syllables in the way that was done for other rhymes. Because the r-words are often regional, colloquial or slangy, relatively few are encountered in beginning textbooks. Here is a selection, ordered by final consonant of the syllable:
Note how the last two columns are pronounced. When $r$ is applied to an $n$-final syllable, the $n$ sound is lost completely: $\text{diàn} \rightarrow \text{dièr}$; $\text{bàn} \rightarrow \text{bàr}$. But when the $r$ is applied to an $ng$-final syllable, the nasal endings survives as nasalization (indicated by the superscript -n), ie the vowels are pronounced nasally: $\text{kòngr} \rightarrow [\text{kö̂nr}]$, etc. These rules are hard to apply, so for now, we will focus on $r$-words that are frequently encountered, like $\text{diènr}$, $\text{yângr}$, $\text{huìr}$ and $\text{kuàir}$.

### 5.15.2 More than two low tones in a phrase

We have now gained enough low toned words to meet strings of more than two. Observe how the following are realized:

1. Yě hén lěng.  
   Yě hén lěng or Yě | hén lěng.

2. Wó yě hén kě.  
   Wó yě | hén kě.

3. Láo Lī yě hén hǎo.  
   Láo Lī yě | hén hǎo.

4. Wó yě hén xiāng xízāo!  
   Wó yě | hén xiāng | xízāo.

The second and fourth examples both have an even number of words (syllables). In such cases, the phrasing tends to be in pairs (as indicated) and the familiar tone shift takes place. But in (1) and (3), where the number of syllables is odd, there may be several options (as seen in the first example): either the phrase is divided into two moras (yě | hén lěng), in which case the regular rule applies to the second. Or, especially in fast speech, the three form a tonal unit, with the first rising (normally), the second staying high, and the third, low: Yě hén lěng.
5.16 Summary

OR  Chá <huòzhě> kāfēi dōu xíng.
Nǐ shì guónéi hàngbān háishi guójì de?
Nǐ píngcháng yòng kuàizi háishi yòng dàochā chīfăn.

Q  Nà, zěnme bàn?

Food  Liàng páng xiànrén-chǎofăn.
Jiǔcài-bāo, yì lóng.

Duō?  Dàwàn duō dà? / Liù ge rén chī.
V+de  Tā chānggē chǎng+de hǎo-jíle!
Hui  Zhī hui shuō yìdiǎndiǎn.

Predications  Jīntiān bù hui hên lèng.
A bit  Hē yìdiǎnr chá ba.
Zhě chá yòu yìdiǎnr kǔ.

Xing  Qǐngkè chīfàn měi jiù bù xíng.

Kids  Xiǎo péngyou chī shénme ne?

VOO  Wǒ xiāng wèn tā yí ge wèntí.

Gěi as CV  Míngtiān gěi nǐ dà ge diànhuà, hǎo bu hǎo?
VOVO  Míngtiān shì tā de shēngrì; wǒmen yǐnggāi mài ge lìwù gěi tā.
Music  Nǐ zúi xǐhuàn shénme yáng de yīnyuè?

Nǐ hui shénme yuèqì?

Know  Bù zhīdào ~ bù xiàode, wǒ bù rènshì tā.

Dōng  Dōng wǒ de yìsi ma?
Bù zhīdào tā shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén.

Go to  Nǐ dào nár qu? ~ Nǐ qú nǎlǐ?
Leave  Wǒmen sān hào liěkāi Běijīng, wǔ hào dào Lǐjiāng.

Move to  Wǒ shēng zài Shāntóu, shíjiǔ sui bān dào Běijīng lái le.
Purpose  Hén duō rén xiǎng dào Běijīng qù zhǎo gōngzuò.
Go home  Tāmen hái méi huījiā.

Sentence le  Zhōumò wǒmen qù Cháng Chéng le.

Verb-le  Shàng-le chē jiù mǎi piào; Wǒmen qùle yí tàng Cháng Chéng.
Sports  Zhōngguó hé Bāxī, shéi yíng le?
Score  Jī bǐ jī?
Can read?  Zhōngwén bāo nǐ kǎndedǒng ma?
5.17 Rhymes and Rhythms

1. Tiào shéng ‘skipping rope [rhymes]’

a) A tale of heart rending tale of betrayal:

Jiāng Jiě, Jiāng Jiě, hǎo Jiāng Jiě,  Sister Jiang, good Sister Jiang,
tā wèi rénmín sà xiān xiě. she for people shed fresh blood.

*and with feeling* > Pàntú, pàntú, Fū Zhīgāo,  Traitor, traitor, Fu Zhigao
Nǐ shì rénmín de ‘dà cāobāo’. You are the people’s ‘great straw-bundle’. (‘good-for-nothing’)

The story of Jiang Jie is well known in China. Jiang Jie was a communist operative who not long before Mao’s victory, was captured by the Kuomintang as a result of the treachery of Fu Zhigao. Her story was the basis for a revolutionary opera (1964), which in turn is the basis of a film of the same name, directed by Zhang Yuan (2004).

b) More heroism:

Dōng Cúnruì,  Dong Cunrui,
shíbā suì,  18 years of age,
cānjiā gěmíng yóujīduì; took part in a revolutionary guerilla force.
zhà diāobāo, xīshēng liāo, blow+up blockhouses, sacrifice [self] LE,
gěmíng de rénwù wánchéng liǎo! revolution DE task complete-fulfill LE.

Note
a) Yóujīduì ‘roving-attack-troops’
b) *Le* is often given the fully toned pronunciation of liǎo in song and poetry.

2. Something a little lighter:

Yuéliàng zòu, wǒ yě zòu,  Moon moves, I also move,
wǒ hé yuéliàng jiāo péngyou, I and moon make friends,
dài lǐ zhuāng-zhe liāng zhī dàn, pocket in filled+with 2 M eggs,
sònggěi yuéliàng dāng zāofān. to present to moon as breakfast.

Notes:
 a) Zhuāng-zhe ‘be loaded with; to be packed with; install’; -zhē is a verb suffix that, among other functions, turns actions (‘to load’) into states (‘be loaded with’).
b) Sònggěi ‘to present to’.
c) Dāng ‘treat as; regard as; be’.