

Complete Lesson Transcript – Lesson 9 [Traditional]

Hosts: Adam Menon / Kirin Yang

Adam: Hello and welcome to lesson 9 of ChineseLearnOnline.com. I'm Adam.

Kirin: 大家好. 我是 Kirin.

Adam: Today we're looking at money. It's always nice when you get to speak some Chinese when shopping, especially if you want to be able to bargain with someone. This could be used when traveling in China itself or hey even in your local Chinatown.

We'll begin today's lesson with asking how much something is. Now normally if you're out shopping and looking at something you have to first point out what it is you're interested in, so let's first learn how to say "this one." How do we say that, Kirin?

Kirin: 這個.

Adam: So that's a fourth tone and a neutral tone.

Kirin: 這個.

Adam: So that means "this one." Now what if we wanted to say "that one"?

Kirin: 那個.

Adam: So again a fourth tone and a neutral tone.

Kirin: 那個.

Adam: So before you ask how much something is you first identify it using 這個 or 那個. How do you then ask "How much is it?"

Kirin: 多少錢?

Adam: So that's a first tone 多, a third tone 少 and a second tone 錢.

Kirin: 多少錢?

Adam: Great, so let's break down the meanings there. 多 means "many" while 少 means "a few." In Chinese you'll see many times that when two opposites are put together, it

forms a question. We'll explore this more later. The last character 錢 means “money.” So by asking “many few money,” you are basically asking “how much money” or “how much” something is.

Kirin: 多少錢?

Adam: So if I ask how much something is and it's fifty dollars, how would they say that?

Kirin: 這個五十塊錢.

Adam: So that's saying “This one is fifty dollars money.”

Kirin: 這個五十塊錢.

Adam: The only new word there is 塊 which is a fourth tone and is a generic unit of currency. That's followed by 錢 which is just specifying that it's money we are talking about. Since that may be obvious you may just hear:

Kirin: 這個五十塊.

Adam: Now in some places instead of 塊 you may hear another word.

Kirin: 元.

Adam: That's a second tone and specifically refers to dollars.

Kirin: 元.

Adam: Now you may recall a couple of lessons ago we introduced a question word – 幾?. Do you remember what “幾?” means? It means... “how many?” So sometimes, usually for smaller amounts, instead of saying...

Kirin: 多少錢?

Adam: ...we can say:

Kirin: 幾塊錢?

Adam: So literally that's “How many dollars of money?”

Kirin: 幾塊錢?

Adam: Now this seems to be a good time to introduce another concept in Chinese – and that’s measure words. Now there are actually two of them in this sentence:

Kirin: 這個幾塊錢?

Adam: Now, 錢 is money and it is measured in 塊– which just means “a unit of money” – doesn’t matter what currency. Different objects use different measure words.

So in this case, money is measured in 塊. Generic objects are measured in 個. So when we say 這個, we haven’t specified what it is we’re talking about so we just use 這個, or “this object.” Over time, as we introduce new vocabulary you’ll start to see new measure words being introduced as well. Now since we’re talking about money, let’s introduce the some different forms of currency. We’ll start with US dollars – which is...

Kirin: 美金.

Adam: So that’s the 美 from 美國 or America followed by a first tone 金 which refers to the money they use in America.

Kirin: 美金.

Adam: Another currency that may be worth noticing is the type used in China which is...

Kirin: 人民幣.

Adam: Now 人 we’ve seen before – that’s a second tone and means... “person or people.” 民 is also a second tone and in this context with the 人 means “citizen.” The last word is a fourth tone 幣 that refers to money. So putting them together we get “the people’s money” or the money used in the People’s Republic of China.

Kirin: 人民幣.

Adam: 幣 is commonly used when referring to the currencies of many countries. On our website, in the premium section of this lesson, you will see a list of currencies from some other countries too.

So let’s have a test for our listeners now. Imagine you’re out shopping for souvenirs and you ask the clerk what the price is. So first, how do you ask “How much is this one?”

Kirin: 這個多少錢?

Adam: Alright, so here are some prices. Let's see if you can figure out how much they are.

Kirin: 兩百五十塊.

Adam: So that is...250 dollars. Let's try another one.

Kirin: 七千三百二十塊.

Adam: 7320 dollars. Here's one more...

Kirin: 九十一塊.

Adam: So that's...91 dollars. Great, so continuing with this scenario, the clerk has just told you the price and you think it's too expensive. How would you let them know that?

Kirin: 太貴了!

Adam: So there are three characters there – the first two are fourth tones and the last word is a neutral tone.

Kirin: 太貴了!

Adam: We've actually seen all three words before. We saw 太 in 太太. Do you remember what “太” means? It means... “too much of something.” We also saw 貴 in “您貴姓?” 貴 means “honorable” or in this case “expensive.” The last character 了 is just a particle used in expressions of this nature. We will study it in more detail in future lessons. So again – “Too expensive!”

Kirin: 太貴了!

Adam: You can see more examples using the same construct in the premium section of this lesson found on our website. Now how about if you wanted a cheaper price, how would you ask for that?

Kirin: 可以便宜一點嗎?

Adam: Wow, so a few new words in there. Let's break it down for you. We know it's a question because of the 嗎 at the end. The first part is 可以 which is two third tones and that means “to be allowed to do something.” Since this is a question you are asking if something is permissible. This is followed by 便宜 which is two second tones and that means “cheap.” We then have 一點 which we've seen before. Do you remember what

“一點” means? It means... “a little.” So putting that all together gives us “Can cheaper a little?” or “Can you make this a little cheaper?”

Kirin: 可以便宜一點嗎?

Adam: Let's continue this dialogue. You've found what you want, you like the price so you want to let the clerk know that you want to purchase it. For this, we need to know the verb “want” which is...

Kirin: 要.

Adam: That's a fourth tone.

Kirin: 要.

Adam: So knowing that, we have all the vocabulary necessary to say “I want this one.” Can you figure out how to say that?

Kirin: 我要這個.

Adam: I hope you got that right.

Kirin: 我要這個.

Adam: Now what if you wanted to say “I want two of them.” How would you say that?

Kirin: 我要兩個.

Adam: So we use 兩 meaning “two” followed by 個 which is the generic measure word so 兩個 means “two of something.” Similarly how would you say “five of something?”

Kirin: 五個.

Adam: And so on. You are now ready to pay for your purchase. For that, you'll need to give the cashier some money, so first let's look at the verb “to give.”

Kirin: 給.

Adam: That's a third tone.

Kirin: 給.

Adam: So if the item is a hundred dollars, you need to say “Give you 100 dollars.”

Kirin: 給你一百塊.

Adam: Note that in many cases you can leave out pronouns when they are obvious, so in this case you wouldn't need to say “I' am giving you money” since the “ I ” is implied.

Kirin: 給你一百塊.

Adam: I hope you got all that. That brings us to the end of lesson 9. Don't forget to take a look at the extra notes and activities to available to premium subscribers on our website ChineseLearnOnline.com for a more detailed explanation of today's lesson plus more review questions and supplemental vocabulary to get you through to the next lesson. We'll continue Lesson 10 where we left off today so be sure to join us then.

Kirin: 再見.