

Complete Lesson Transcript – Lesson 13 [Simplified]

Hosts: Adam Menon / Kirin Yang

Adam: Hello and welcome to Lesson 13 of ChineseLearnOnline.com. I'm your host, Adam.

Kirin: 大家好. 我是 Kirin.

Adam: In today's lesson we'll discuss more about introductions. When you're out meeting Chinese people, they might ask if you can speak Chinese, or you might want to ask if they can speak English, or they just might want to know where you're from. So we'll go over all of this in today's lesson. Let's begin with the word for the Chinese language. We learned the word 中文 before, which is a generic word used for the language. In Mainland China, however, they use a different word.

Kirin: 普通话.

Adam: Now there are three characters there with three different tones. Do you know what they are?

Kirin: 普通话.

Adam: The first was a third tone 普. The second is a first tone 通 and the last is a fourth tone 话. 普通话 now this refers to the official language of mainland China – Mandarin Chinese. The literal translation is “common speech.” 普通 means “common or ordinary” while 话 refers to “speech.” So when you travel to Mainland China you may hear references to that.

If someone asks you...

Kirin: “你会说普通话吗?”

Adam: Would you know what that means? Hopefully you do, since we've taught it before – “Can you speak Chinese?” Now what if you want to ask someone if they can speak English, how would you do that?

Kirin: 你会说英文吗?

Adam: Great. And how would you reply: “I can speak a little.”

Kirin: 我会说一点.

Adam: Great! Next we'll learn the question "Where are you from?"

Kirin: 你从哪里来?

Adam: Ok, so you should know the first character for "you" followed by a few new characters after that. Let's look at them separately.

Kirin: 你从哪里来?

Adam: The second character there is a second tone 从. 从 means "from." So that gives us "you from." The next word is made up for two characters 哪里, which are two third tones. 哪里. We've actually seen both of these before. Do you remember what "哪" means?

Kirin, where did we see that before?

Kirin: 是哪五个人?

Adam: Ah yes, so what did 哪 mean there? It meant "which" – as in "which 5 people are in your family?" We then have 里, which we've also seen in 那里 and 这里 meaning "there" and "here." So 里 on its own means "inside." So what do you think "which inside" means? It actually means "where." You have to keep a very open mind when we give you these literal definitions since the characters in Chinese have very broad meanings and thus are very context sensitive. So as you can see we have learned another question word here. We earlier learned 什么 which means "what." Then we learned 几? which means "how many." We then learned 哪, meaning "which" and now we are learning 哪里 which means "where." So getting back to our original question:

Kirin: 你从哪里来?

Adam: We so far have "you from where." Which leads us to our last character, a second tone 来 which is the verb "to come." So that gives us "you from where come?" I think that's easy to figure out as "Where do you come from?"

Kirin: 你从哪里来?

Adam: We can now make use of the countries we learned in lesson three to answer that question.

Kirin: 我从美国来.

Adam: I come from America.

Kirin: 我从澳洲来.

Adam: I come from Australia. And so on.

Now every lesson we're teaching a few new characters, but I want to make sure that you don't forget what you've learned so far. So there are review questions in the Premium notes link for this lesson on our website, that should hopefully help you out well with this. These are important because in these podcast lessons we're teaching everything to you through audio of course, which works well for some people. But other people like to see things visually – so visit the website and associated pages with for each lesson and see the character representations of everything we're talking about here.

Now let's take this time to review some of the material from previous lessons. Try to answer these questions yourself before listening to Kirin's answer. We'll start with meeting people. How do we ask someone what their last name or what their family name is?

Kirin: 您贵姓?

Adam: Ok, and how do you ask someone what their first name or their given name is?

Kirin: 你叫什么名字?

Adam: How about "How old are you?"

Kirin: 你几岁?

Adam: Hm, let's try. I like America very much.

Kirin: 我很喜欢美国.

Adam: How about "I can speak a little Chinese?"

Kirin: 我会说一点中文.

Adam: Alright. Next one is "My Chinese isn't very good."

Kirin: 我的中文说得不好.

Adam: Ok. And how about "Nice to meet you"?

Kirin: 很高兴认识你.

Adam: Great. So hope you're doing well there. Now let's now listen to a short conversation between two Chinese speakers.

Yann: 你好.

Cindy: 你好.

Yann: 你好吗?

Cindy: 我很好. 你呢?

Yann: 我也很好.

Adam: You'll notice in the end that he used the character 也 which we learned recently. What does “也” mean? It means “also.” So he just told her that “He is also good.” Useful to know.

Let's switch to some other review questions. How do you ask: “How much is this?”

Kirin: 这个多少钱?

Adam: Alright, and how about “I am 39 years old”?

Kirin: 我三十九岁.

Adam: Ok, hope you're keeping up. We'll be building upon this in future lessons, so make sure you're using all the review tools on our website, then join us again for lesson 14.

Kirin: 再见.