Complete Lesson Transcript – Lesson 19 [Simplified]

Hosts: Adam Menon / Kirin Yang

Adam: Hello and welcome to Lesson 19 of the ChineseLearnOnline.com podcast series teaching Mandarin Chinese. I'm your host, Adam.

Kirin: 大家好. 我是 Kirin.

Adam: Today we're going to listen to a conversation that involves time and teaches us how to say the different times of the day. Please follow along with the included summary on your MP3 player screen, or through one the transcripts on our website.

Yann: 现在几点?
Cindy: 现在六点半.
Yann: 我们明天几点要出去?
Cindy: 明天下午两点可以吗?
Yann: 好，没问题.

Adam: Ok, let's listen to the dialogue one more time. This time, repeat after Kirin.

Kirin: 现在几点?
现在六点半.
我们明天几点要出去?
明天下午两点可以吗?
好，没问题.

Adam: Ok, let's now go through this dialogue line by line, starting off with the first line.

Kirin: 现在几点?

Adam: We've actually seen all these characters before. What does "现在" mean? It means "right now." How about "几"? What does that mean? That means "how many?" The last character 点 we've seen before in 一点. What does "一点" mean? It means "a little." The literal translation of 点 is "a dot" or "a point." So by saying "a dot" or "a point" we are actually saying "a little" in Chinese. So getting back to our example here we literally have "Right now how many dots?" Do you have any idea what that means? That's actually asking "What time is it right now?" The "dots or points" refers to the points or dots on a clock. So you're actually asking "right now – how many points (are on the clock)?" – or "What time is it?"

Kirin: 现在几点?

Adam: The woman then replies:

Kirin: 现在六点半.

Adam: Ok, so you may figure out the first part. “Right now it’s six points” or “six o’clock.” However we also have a 半 character at the end. The 半 is a fourth tone and literally means “half.” So “six point half” translates to “half past six” or “six thirty.”

Kirin: 现在六点半.

Adam: For other times we use the character 分 which is a first tone meaning “minute.” So for example to say “six fifteen” you would say:

Kirin: 六点十五分

Adam: …which literally means “six points fifteen minutes.”

Kirin: 六点十五分.

Adam: Alright so let’s continue on with the next line of the dialogue.

Kirin: 我们明天几点要出去?

Adam: So you may be able to figure out most of this. What does “我们” mean? It means… “we.” What does “明天” mean? That means… “tomorrow.” We then have 几点 or “what time” followed by the verb 要. Do you remember what “要” means? That’s the verb “to want.” The last character of the sentence is another verb 去. What does “去” mean? That’s the verb “to go.” Now there’s another character sandwiched in between. It’s a first tone 出 and in this context means “out.” So the literal translation of the sentence is “We tomorrow what time want out go?” So you may be able to figure that out to mean… “What time do we want to go out tomorrow?” This could also mean “What time are we going out tomorrow?”

Kirin: 我们明天几点要出去?

Adam: You’ll often see 出去 used together to mean “go out,” so remember that one. The next line was…

Kirin: 明天下午两点可以吗?

Adam: There's a new word there 下午 which is important – that's a fourth tone 下 and a third tone 午. And together means "afternoon." Now 下 is another one of those characters with many meanings depending on context. We've seen it before with 一下. Do you remember what 一下 means? It means "a moment." Here, it means "after." And the 午 loosely translates to "noon," so "after noon" – 下午. Take a look at the vocabulary and notes link for this lesson on our website to learn more about 下 in where it's used. You can hopefully figure out the rest of the sentence.

What does "两" mean? It means "two of something" – in this case it's "two points on the clock" so she's saying "tomorrow afternoon two o'clock 可以吗?" What does "可以吗?" mean? It's asking if this is permissible.

Kirin: 明天下午两点可以吗?

Adam: "Is tomorrow at 2 pm OK?" The last line of the dialogue was:

Kirin: 好，没问题.

Adam: So we know 好 means "ok." That's followed by 没问题. We've seen 没 before in 没有. What does that mean? That means "don't have" so the 没 is a negation character similar to 不. We then have 问题. We've seen 问 before in "请问?". What does "请问?" mean? That means "Please can I ask" or literally "Please ask" so 问 on its own means "ask." The 题 at the end is a second tone and together with the 问 means "question." So 没问题 literally means "no question." Now in Chinese, "question" is a synonym for the word "problem" so this is a very common expression meaning "no problem."

Kirin: 没问题.

Adam: Now we talked about 下午 which means "afternoon." Let's look at some other times of day.

Kirin: 上午.

Adam: That's a fourth tone 上 followed by 午. 上 is the opposite of 下 so if 下午 means "afternoon," 上午 means "before noon" or in other words "morning."

Kirin: 上午.

Adam: You may also hear the word:

Kirin: 早上.

Adam: 早 is a third tone and means "early." So…

Kirin: 早上.

Adam: … means "early before" which translates to "morning" in Chinese. So 早上 and 上午 both mean "morning."

Another time of the day is:

Kirin: 中午.

Adam: That's a first tone 中 followed by 午. Now we've seen 中 before in 中国. Do you remember what the "中" there means? It means "middle." So if 上午 means "morning" and 下午 means "afternoon," what's in the middle? That'll be "noon."

Kirin: 中午.

Now "noon" in Chinese is a little different from the "noon" in English – it actually refers to the time between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. So it's a couple of hours long in Chinese. Lastly we'll introduce:

Kirin: 晚上.

Adam: …which is a third tone 晚 followed by 上. 晚 is the opposite of 早. So while 早 means "early," 晚 means "late." So "before late" here ends up translating to "night time."

Kirin: 晚上.

Adam: When telling times in Chinese they use the times of day to specify "a.m." or "p.m." So Kirin, why don't you give us some times and we'll try and figure out what time of day it is.

Kirin: 下午三点四十五分.

Adam: So that's "afternoon 3:45″ or "3:45 p.m."

Kirin: 下午三点四十五分.

Adam: Let's try another one.

Kirin: 早上七点半.

Adam: So that's "morning 7:30″ or "7:30 a.m."

Kirin: 早上七点半.

Adam: Now 半 of course means "half." This is equivalent to saying "half past 7″ rather than "7:30." If you wanted to, though, you could say:

Kirin: 早上七点半.

Adam: …meaning "7:30." Let's do one more.

Kirin: 晚上九点五分.

Adam: So that is "evening 9:05″ or "9:05 p.m."

Kirin: 晚上九点五分.

Adam: So hopefully you see how this works. You can find more examples and lesson summaries in the vocabulary and notes section of this lesson on our website. For now, though, let's listen to the dialogue line by line. Please repeat after Kirin.

Kirin: 现在几点?
现在六点半.
我们明天几点要出去?
明天下午两点可以吗?
好，没问题.

Adam: And let's now hear the dialogue again at regular speed.

Yann: 现在几点?
Cindy: 现在六点半.
Yann: 我们明天几点要出去?
Cindy: 明天下午两点可以吗?
Yann: 好，没问题.

Adam: Great; so I hope you all learned something there. Please take a look at all the notes and review activities on our website to make sure you're keeping up, then join us again next time for Lesson 20.

Kirin: 再见.