



It's one thing to be able to know and recognize lots of vocabulary, but it's another thing to actually be able to use it properly. In Chinese, more than in English, many words can be used in multiple situations and it's important to know which word to use when. One way to learn is to try and use different ways to express yourself in common situations. You have learned different ways to say "Excuse me," "Sorry to bother you", "I'm embarrassed to ask you" etc. Try to learn which phrases are better used for which situations. If you live in a Chinese speaking community, you can learn a lot by listening to those around you. The next time you are standing in line to buy a ticket, listen to the way the person in front of you purchases it. Does he use the same words and phrases that you do? Try and mix it up once in a while to practice what you know already rather than always focusing on learning new vocabulary.



There are different stages to learning a language. During the early stages you will find yourself learning how to say common words and phrases by translating them back to English. At some point, however, you will reach a stage where you already recognize most common words and when new words arise, you will find they are synonyms of words you already know. This is the stage where you will now find yourself having choices in how to express yourself, and can now actually choose the words to convey the proper nuances of your message. This is the stage we are aiming to get to in upcoming levels, since Chinese can then be used to explain the lesson using vocabulary you already know. We saw that in today's lesson when the phrase "I haven't see you for a long time" was taught as another way to say "Long time no see." Notice how that was all expressed without using any English! Embrace the fact that you are getting to this next stage!