

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #1

Meeting - What's Your Name in Chinese?

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DIALOGUE - CHINESE

SIMPLIFIED

1. A: 你好。
2. B: 你好，你叫什么名字？
3. A: 我叫张林。
4. B: 我叫王小芳。

ENGLISH

1. A: Hello.
2. B: Hello, what's your name?
3. A: I'm Zhang Lin.
4. B: I'm Wang Xiaofang.

PINYIN

1. A: Nǐhǎo.
2. B: Nǐhǎo, nǐ jiào shénme míngzì?
3. A: Wǒ jiào Zhāng Lín.
4. B: Wǒ jiào Wáng Xiǎofāng.

TRADITIONAL

1. A: 你好。
2. B: 你好，你叫什麼名字？
3. A: 我叫張林。
4. B: 我叫王小芳。

VOCABULARY

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English	Class
我	我	wǒ	I, me	pronoun
你	你	nǐ	you	pronoun
什么	什麼	shénme	what	pronoun
叫	叫	jiào	to call	verb
名字	名字	míngzì	name	
你好	你好	nǐhǎo	hello	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

我的朋友很帅。 <i>Wǒ de péngyǒu hěn shuài.</i> My friend is really handsome.	是你吗？ <i>Shì nǐ ma?</i> Is it you?
你午饭吃什么？ <i>Nǐ wǔfàn chī shénme?</i> What will you eat for lunch?	为什么？ <i>Wèishénme?</i> What for?
你说什么？ <i>Nǐ shuō shénme?</i> What did you say?	什么事儿？ <i>Shénme shìr?</i> What's the matter?
今年，我妹妹又出了一张专辑，叫《月光》。 <i>Jīnnián, wǒ mèimei yòu chū le yī zhāng zhuānjí, jiào Yuèguāng.</i> My sister put out another album this year, called "Moonlight."	我叫子安。 <i>Wǒ jiào Zǐ ān.</i> My name is Zi an.
你叫什么名字？ <i>Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?</i> What is your name?	你叫什么名字？ <i>Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?</i> What's your name?
我忘记了他的名字。 <i>Wǒ wàngjì le tā de míngzi.</i> I've forgotten his name.	你好，我想找安娜。 <i>Nǐhǎo, wǒ xiǎng zhǎo Ānnà.</i> Hello, can I speak to Anna?
你好，我叫王国易。 <i>Nǐhǎo, wǒ jiào Wáng Guóyì.</i> Hello, I'm Wang Guoyi.	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

你好 (nǐhǎo) / 您好 (nínhǎo) - "Hello" in Chinese is made up of two words: 你 (nǐ), meaning "you" and '好 (hǎo), meaning "good." On very formal meetings, you can replace the 你 (nǐ) with the formal term for "you," which is 您 (nín). 叫 (jiào) is literally the verb for "to call." So, as in the case of our dialogue, when you are saying, "My name is _____," in Chinese, actually you are saying "I'm called _____."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Pronouns in Chinese

我叫张林。

"I'm Zhang Lin."

Here is a listing of pronouns in Chinese:

Chinese	"English"
我 (wǒ)	"I, me"
我们 (wǒmen)	"we, us"
你 (nǐ)	"you" - <i>informal</i>
你们 (nǐmen)	"you" - <i>plural</i>
您 (nín)	"you" - <i>formal</i>
他 (tā)	"he, him"
他们 (tāmen)	"they, them"
她 (tā)	"she, her"
她们 (tāmen)	"they, them"
它 (tā)	"it"

What Is Your Name?

In Chinese, as we heard in this lesson's dialogue, one way of asking a person their name is:

你叫什么名字？

Nǐ jiào shénme míngzì?

"What is your name" (literally: "You called what name?")

The question word "what" in Chinese is 什么 (*shénme*).

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Chinese Names

Chinese names are given surname first, and then given name. Generally, Chinese names are made up of two or three characters total (including the surname, which is generally just a single character). We see a couple examples of names in this lesson's dialogue.

For Example:

1. 张林

Zhāng Lín

(surname here is 张, given name is 林)

2. 王小芳

Wáng Xiǎofāng

(surname here is 王, given name is 小芳)

Chinese names are full of meaning and not all characters are suitable for a name. It is best to not attempt to choose one's own name in Chinese. Enlist the help of a Chinese friend so you don't end up with a name that will cause some raised eyebrows and snickers.