

Word order

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Unit 1 Importance of Sentence Elements

Parts of speech can help to tell the usage of a word, but it doesn't mean it must be able to tell the word order.

For examples, a noun can be a subject or an object. If the noun works as a subject, it comes at the beginning of a sentence. If the noun works as an object, it comes at the end.

Instead, sentence elements can help to tell the word order

1) She is very pretty (subject)

kéuih hóu leng
she very pretty

“kéuih: she” here is a pronoun.

“kéuih” works as a “subject” and therefore it is put at the beginning of the sentence

2) Her mum beat her (object)

kéuih mā-mìh dá kéuih
her mum beat her

“kéuih: her” here is also a pronoun.

“kéuih” works as a “object” and therefore it is put at the end of the sentence

3) We have meal at 5:00 (adverbial)

ngóh-deih íng-dím sihk-faahn
we 5:00 eat rice

“5:00” is a noun (time word), since it works as an adverb (adverb of time) to modify the verb “eat”. it has to come before “eat”.

4) They go to Central (object)

kéuih-deih heui Jūng-Wàahn
they go Central

“Jung-Wàahn” is a noun (place word), since it works as an object (object of the action “go: heui”), it has to come after the action “go: heui”

5) They are shopping in Central (adverbial)

kéuih-deih hái Jūng-Wàahn máaih-yéh
they at Central buy stuff

“Jung-Wàahn” is a noun (place word), since it form with “at: hái” to work as an adverb (adverb of place), it has to come before the action/verb “go: heui” it modifies

Unit 2 Definitions of Sentence Elements

There are 6 elements of a sentences in total:

1. Subject

The subject in a Cantonese sentence is the **topic** talked about.

2. Predicate

The predicate tells what is **said about the subject**

3. Object

The sentence element that is governed by a verb and denotes a person, thing or place that **receives the actions** of verb is called an object.

An object is usually placed after a verb.

4. Attribute

The sentence element that **modifies a noun** or nominal phrase and expresses the quality, state, quantity or category of the person or thing modified is called an attribute.

5. Adverbial

The sentence element that **modifies a verb or an adjective** by expressing its time, place, manner, scope, quality, state or degree is called an adverbial.

6. Complement

Complement is a supplementary or **explanatory element**, which is attached to a verb or an adjective.

It indicates how the action is going on, what its result is, how many times or how long it is done, or what degree or extent a quality or state of things reaches.

Unit 3 Basic Rules for Word Order

1. By logical sequence

📖 If you don't know what word order you have to use, just put the order in the way you are used to. Usually you will be correct as basically most languages are in logical sequence.

- 1) She has money

kéuh yáuh chín

she has money

- 2) She will buy a piano

kéuh wúih máaih yāt-ga gong-káhm

she will buy 1 MW piano

- 3) He is going to go to Central (He goes to Central)

kéuh heui Jūng-Wàahn

he go Central

- 4) She has \$3.5

kéuh yáuh sāam-go-bun

she has \$3.5

- 5) He is going to Wanchai to buy flowers

kéuh heui Wāan-Jái máaih fā

he go Wanchai buy flowers

- 6) They are students

kéuh-deih haih hohk-sāang

they be students

2. Modifier comes before what it modifies

(1) Attributive modifies a noun

- 1) a big apple

yāt-go daaih pìhng-gwó
1 MW big apple

- 2) They are good friends

kéuih-deih haih hóu pàhng-yáuh
they are good friends

- 3) Chinese (people)

Jūng-Gwok yàhn (“Jūng-Gwok modifies “yàhn”)
China people

- 4) English (language)

yīng mán
English language

- 5) Japanese (people)

yaht-bún yàhn
Japan people

- 6) German (language)

dāk mán
German language

- 7) My colleagues (“my” modifies “colleagues”)

ngóh tūhng-sih
my colleagues

- 8) Three books (“three” modifies “books”)

sāam-bún syū
3 MW books

(2) Adverbial modifies an adjective

- 1) He is very lazy

kéuih hóu láahn
he very lazy

- 2) This clothing is quite nice

nī-gihn sāam géi hóu
this MW clothing quite nice

- 3) It's really too hot!

jān-haih taai yiht la
really too hot PRT

(3) Adverbial modifies a verb

- 1) He takes the MTR most of the time

kéuih dō sou daap deih-tit
he most of the time take MTR

- 2) He always goes to play

kéuih sīhng-yaht heui wáan
he always go play

3. Result comes after the action

- 📖 Complement is the results or explanatory of the action

1) They have gone for 4 hours

kéuih-deih heui-jó sei go jūng
they gone 4 MW hours

2) I have left Hong Kong for 3 years

ngóh lèih-hōi jó Hēung-Góng sāam-nìhn
I leave ed Hong Kong three years

3) She has left for half an hour

kéuih jáu-jó bun go jūng
he leave ed half MW hour

📖 “lèih-hōi” must be followed by an object eg. leave Hong Kong, Mary leaves Peter.

“jáu” can not be followed by an object.

4) I have been to Vancouver once

ngóh heui gwo Wān-Gō-Wàh yāt chi
I go EXP Vancouver 1 time

5) The dolphin jumps up

jek hói-tyùhn tiu héi
MW dolphin jump up

4. Open Questions

📖 They share the same order as the statements

1) Where do you go?

néih heui bīn (douh) a?
you go where PRT?

2) What did you bought?

néih máaih jó māt yéh a?
you buy ed what PRT?

3) How much is it?

nī-go géi chín a?
this MW how money PRT?

4) How about you?

néih díng a?
you how PRT?

5. Yes/No questions

📖 A-not-A format

1) Will you buy?(Do you buy)

néih máaih m̀h máaih a? or
you buy not buy PRT?

néih wúih m̀h wúih máaih a?
you will not will buy PRT?

📖 (using “wúih m̀h wúih” here shows more emphasis on the willingness of “buying”)

2) Is he tall?

kéuih gōu m̀h gōu ga?
he tall not tall PRT?

3) Do you have money?

néih yáuh móuh chín a?
you have not have money PRT?

4) Do you have small change?

néih **yáuh** **móuh** **sáan-jí** **a?**
you have not have small change PRT

📖 The subject “you: néih” is usually understood and can be skipped.

5) Is he your husband?

kéuih **haih** **m̀h** **haih** **néih** **sīn-sāang** **a?**
he is not is your husband PRT?

6) How about this one?

nī **go** **hóu** **m̀h** **hóu** **a?**
this MW good not good PRT?

Unit 4 Positions of Different Elements

1. Subject

📖 Subject is the topic talked about

(1) Subject is at the beginning

1) She likes the doll

kéuih **jūng** **yi** **go** **gūng** **jái**
she like MW doll

2) The weather is fine

tīn-hei **hóu** **hóu**
weather very fine/good

3) Here's \$150

nī-douh **yāt-baak** **ng-sahp** **mān** (**baak** **ng** **mān**)
here 1 hundred 50 dollars (short form of \$150)

4) Happiness can't be bought by money

hōi sām **haih** **m̀h** **hó-yíh** **yuhng** **chín** **máaih** **ge**
happy buy not can use money buy PRT

5) Today is Tuesday

gām **yaht** **haih** **sīng-kèih-yih**

6) He is very stubborn

kéuih **hóu** **gu-jāp**

7) He is watching TV

kéuih tái gán dihn-sih
my watch ing TV

8) He is Australian

kéuih haih Ou-Jāu yàhn

9) He scolds her

kéuih laauh kéuih

10) Who has come?

bīn-go làih-jó a?

11) Swimming is good to health

yàuh-séui deui sān-tái hóu hóu
swimming to body very good

12) Travel has to spend lots of money

léuih-hàhng yiu yuhng hóu-dō chin
travel have to use much money

13) This book is mine

nī bún syū haih ngóh ge
this MW book is mine

14) Today is Christmas

gām-yaht haih Sing-Daan-Jit
today is Christmas

(2) Subject comes after the time adverbial

📖 Time adverbial can be placed between the subject and the verb or even before the subject.

Usually, if the time adverbial is long, people always place it before the subject. It is because the sentence won't be so clumsy.

1) I will go the New Zealand next month,

hah-go yuht, ngóh wúih heui Náu-Sāi-Làahn
next MW month, I will go New Zealand

📖 Of course, one can also put “hah-go-yuht” after the subject “ngóh”.

2) On the fifteenth of next month, they will go to travel

hah-go yuht sahp-ígh houh, kéuih-deih wúih heui
next MW month 15 number, they will go
léuih-hàhng
travel

3) Tomorrow, I will visit my friends

tīng-yaht, ngóh wúih taam ngóh pàhng-yáuh

4) On Mother's day, our family had meal together

Móuh-Chān-Jit¹, ngóh-deih ūk-kéi-yàhn yāt-chàih
mother festival, our family people together
sihk-faahn
eat rice

5) I will go to study in Canada later
(Later, I will go to Canada to study)

¹ m^ouh-ch_≤n is the Chinese form of mother, usually Hong Kong people say “m_≠h” for mother.

chìh-dī, ngóh wúih heui Gā-Nàh-Daaih duhk-syū
later, I will go Canada study

(3) Subject comes after the prepositional phrase (adverbial)

Very often, prepositional phrase (preposition + noun) placed after the subject. Just in certain situation, it may also be put before the subject. For example, for prepositional phrase with place word, defining the action in a certain place, it may also be placed before the subject. Usually if the prepositional phrase is longer, the higher chance that people would like to put them before the subject.

- 1) At the company, he is responsible for typing

hái gūng-sī, kéuih haih fuh-jaak dá- jih ge.
at company, he be responsible type characters PRT
Again, of course one can also put the "hái gūng-sī" after the subject "kéuih"
kéuih hái gūng-sī haih fuh-jaak dá- jih ge.

- 2) At the school, he is good boy. However at home, he is very naughty

hái hohk-haauh, kéuih haih yāt-go gwāai hohk-sāang,
at school, he be a MW nice student
daaih-haih hái ūk-kéi, kéuih jauh hóu yáih
but at family, he EMPHASIS very naughty

- 3) In order to earn more money, he has part-time jobs

waih jó jaahn dō-dī chín, kéuih jouh gīm-jīk
for earn more money, he do concurrent job

- 4) In here, she is happier

hái nī douh, kéuih hōi-sām dī
at here, she happy more

or

kéuih hái nī douh hōi-sām dī

- 5) In Hong Kong, many houses are very small

hái Hēung-Góng, hóu dō ūk dōu hóu sai
in Hong Kong many houses also very small
or

hóu dō ūk hái Hēung-Góng, dōu hóu sai

2. Predicate

- Predicate section tells what is said about the subject.

Predicate section comes after the subject

The main verb or adjective is called predicate

- 1) She always cries

kéuih sìhng-yaht haam

- Subject: she = kéuih

Predicate section: always cry = sìhng-yaht haam

Predicate: cry = haam

- 2) My younger brother is very foolish/stupid

ngóh sai lóu hóu chéun

- Subject: My younger brother = ngóh sai-lóu

Predicate section: very foolish = hóu chéun

Predicate: foolish = chéun

3) There are many people in Hong Kong

Hēung-Góng yáuh hóu dō yàhn

4) It's very hot in summer in Hong Kong

Hēung Góng ge hah-tīn hóu yíht
Hong Kong 's summer very hot

5) She is very fat

kéuih hóu fèih
she very fat

6) You(plural) are very lazy

néih deih hóu láahn
you very lazy

7) He likes eating ice-cream very much

kéuih hóu jūng-yi sihk syut-gōu
he very likes eat [ice-cream]

3. Object

📖 Object is the one who receives the action of the verb

Object comes after the verb

1) They laughed at me

kéuih-deih siu ngóh
they laugh me

2) He said that I'm very diligent

kéuih wah ngóh hóu kàhn-lihk
he said I very diligent

3) You cheat me

néih āak ngóh

4) He can draw comics

kéuih sīk waahk maahn-wá
he can draw comics

5) They don't afraid of being tired

kéuih-deih m̀h pa gwuih
they not afraid tired

6) I have to buy text books and exercise books

ngóh yiu máaih syū tùhng bóu
I have to buy text books and exercises books

7) I am going to Central

ngóh heui Jūng-Wàahn
I go Central

8) I'm doing my homework

ngóh jough-gán gūng-fo
I do ing homework

9) He killed that man

kéuih saat-jó gó-go yàhn / yán
he kill ed that MW(the) person

4. Attributive

📖 Attributive modifies a noun or a noun phrase

Attributive comes before the noun

Usually between the attributive and the noun, the Linking Particle “ge” is used.

1) very cute baby

hóu dāk-yi ge bīh-bī

2) very interesting book

hóu hóu tái ge syū
very good watch LP book

3) ticket for 9:30

gáu díng bun ge fēi (where “ge” is the linking particle)

4) a very brave person

yāt-go hóu yúhng-gám ge yàhn
I MW very brave LP person

5) three interesting books

sāam-bún hóu hóu tái ge syū
3 MW very good read LP books

6) very cute puppy

hóu dāk-yi ge gáu-jái
very cute LP dog SUFFIX (baby, son)

7) pretty lady

leng néui (“leng” is single syllable, don’t use “ge”)

8) fat guy

fèih lóu (“fèih” is single syllable, don’t use “ge”)

9) his home

kéuih ūk-kéi
(kinship/belongs to that organization, usually skip “ge”)

10) his daughter

(“néui” is single syllable, due to balancing the sound, people make it be disyllable)
kéuih nèuih néui
(usually for the daughter who is less than 10)

kéuih go néui

(“go” is the MW and marks for singular) (his daughter)

kéuih dī néui

(“dī” is the MW and marks for plural) (his daughters)

kéuih ge néui

*(possessive particles “ge” don’t show its singular or plural)
(his daughter / his daughters)*

📖 Whenever the MW is used, no need to use the LP “ge” to show possessive

11) my hand

ngóh jek sáu (“jek” is MW for hand)

12) this person

nī-go yàhn

13) those money

gó-dī chín (“dī” is MW for any plural objects when the exact quantity is not know or for uncountable objects)

14) a pen

yāt-jī bāt

15) a cup of milk tea

yāt būi náaih-chàh

📖 The modifier could be a clause

16) There are not many American who can speak Cantonese

sīk góng Gwóng-Dūng-Wá ge ngoih-gwok-yàhn
know speak Cantonese LP foreigner
m̀h-haih hóu-dō
not many

17) Parents like children who are good at school work

fuh-móuh dōu jūng-yi dī duhk-syū lēk ge sai-mān-jái
parent also like MW study smart LP children

18) In the mainland, many scholars doing research jobs get very low salaries

hái Jūng-Gwok, hóu-dō jòuh yìhn-gau ge hohk-jé
in Chinese, many do research LP scholars
dōu dāk hóu-sú yàhn-gūng
also have only little salary

19) Hong Kong is a city that many people like it

Hēung-Góng haih yāt-go hóu-dō yàhn
Hong Kong be 1 MW many people

dōu jūng-yi ge s̀hng-síh

also like LP city

20) You are just a person that know how to eat but don't know how to work.

néih jing-yat haih go sīk sikh faahn,
you just be MW know eat rice
m̀h sīk jòuh yéh ge daaih faahn-túng
don't know do thing LP big rice bucket

5. Adverbial

📖 Adverbial modifies the verb or the adjective

It comes before the verb or the adjective

1) very clever

hóu chūng-mìhng

2) She's very arrogant and so no one like her

kéuih hóu jih-daaiah só-yíh móuh yàhn jūng-yi kéuih
she very arrogant therefore no one like her

3) I also went

ngóh dōu heui

4) always yawn

ngóh chàhm-yaht móuh fahn-gaau,
I yesterday didn't sleep
só yíh gām-yaht s̀hng yaht dá-haam-louh
therefore today always yawn

5) Sometimes, he has to do overtime

kéuih yáuh-sìh yiu gā-bāan
he sometimes have to OT

6) He seldom offends others

kéuih hóu-síu dāk-jeuih yàhn
he very less offend people

7) I've just eaten

ngóh āam āam sihk-jó faahn

8) The child is crossing the road carefully

go sai-mān-jái hóu síu-sām gám gwo-gán máh-louh
MW child very careful ly cross ing road
(LP "gám" is used for disyllabic adjectives used as adverbial)

9) You have to study more diligently

néih yiu kàhn-lihk-dī duhk syū
("dī" means "more" here, If "dī" is used, don't use the LP "gám")

10) You should practice more

néih yīng gōi dō-dī lihn-jaahp

11) She works in a hospital

kéuih hái yī-yún fāan gūng
"place word: yī-yún" should add "at: hái" in front of it to form a prepositional phrase to work as an adverbial

12) I will go to Paris in June

ngóh luhk-yuht heui Bā Làih

13) They will come to my home tomorrow

kéuih-deih tīng-yaht làih ngóh ūk-kéi

14) I will go to watch movie at 4:30

ngóh sei-dím bun heui tái hei
I 4:30 go watch movie

15) I will go to your office at 10:45

ngóh sahp-dím gáu heui néih gūng-sī
I 10:45 go your company

6. Complement

📖 Complement is an explanatory element that is attached to a verb or an adjective.

It comes after the verb or the adjectives

1) speak very fast

góng dāk hóu faai
speak LP very fast
Between the verb "góng" and the complement "hóu faai", usually the linking particle "dāk" is used

2) I saw Peter

ngóh gin dóu Peter
I saw successfully Peter

3) She answers correctly

kéuih daap āam
she answer correctly

4) He answers incorrectly

kéuih daap cho

5) I haven't seen clearly yet

ngóh meih tái chīng-chó
I not yet saw clear

6) Please clean the table

m̄h-gōi maat gōng-jehng jēung tói ā
please wipe clean MW(the) table PRT

7) Your cloth is so dirty, you make the table dirty

néih faai bou gam wū-jōu, maat wū-jōu jēung tói la
your MW(the) cloth so dirty, wipe dirty MW(the) table PRT

8) We arrived at home

ngóh-deih fāan dou ūk-kéi
we back to, arrived home

9) He opened the window

kéuih dá hōi chēung
he open arrived at the state of being open window

10) They walked to the elephant

kéuih-deih hàahng heui jek daaih-bahn-jeuhng douh
they walk to MW(the) big clumsy elephant's place
(The short form of elephant is just "jeuhng")

11) She saw me yesterday

kéuih chähm-yaht gin dóu ngóh or
chähm yaht, kéuih gin dóu ngóh
yesterday, he see successfully me

12) They sit on the sofa

kéuih-deih chók hái sō-fá douh
they sit at sofa's place

13) Go in

yahp heui
in go ("heui" shows the direction –away the speaker)

14) She picked up the book

kéuih jāp héi bún syū
she pick up MW(the) book

15) They finished their homework
(they do finish homework)

kéuih-deih jough yùhn gūng-fo
they do finish homework

7. Independent Elements

📖 An independent element is one which has no structural relation with other elements

It is rather flexible in word position

Usually they are placed in a very logical place and learners won't make mistake with it.

(1) Ming, what time is it? Appellation

1) Ming, what time is it?

áh Míhng, yìh-gā géc dím a?

PX Ming, now what time PRT?

2) Mum, I want to buy this toy car

mā-mìh, ngóh séung máaih nī-ga wuhn-geuih chē

mummy, I want buy this MW toy car

3) Oh you, be more careful!

néih a, síu-sām dī a!

you PRT, careful more PRT!

(2) I'm dead, I forget to bring my wallet Interjection

4) I'm dead, I forget to bring my wallet?

séi la, ngóh m̀h gei-dāk daai ngàhn-bāau a

dead PRT, I forget bring wallet PRT

5) Oh, I even thought it's she

ai-yah, ngóh juhng yìh-wàih haih kéuih t̀m

ai ya, I even thought be him PRT

(3) It seems, it will rains tonight Parenthesis

6) It seems, it will rain tonight

tái làih, gām-máahn wúih loh-k-yúh

seems, tonight will fall rain

7) To be frank, you are really too fat

góng jān ge, néih jān haih taai fèih la

talk real PRT, you really be too fat PRT

8) Oh you see, how cute it is!

néih tái, géi dāk-yi

you see, how cute!

Unit 5 Common sentence patterns

1. I beat him

Subject + Verb + Object

📖 The main verb follows the subject and comes before the object.

1) I beat him

ngóh dá kéuih
I beat him

2) I go to Central

ngóh heui Jūng-Wàahn
I go Central

3) I watch TV

ngóh tái dihn-sih
I watch TV

4) I buy books.

ngóh máaih syū

5) I go to Jordan.

ngóh heui Jó-Dēun

6) I watch movie

ngóh tái hei

7) I know him

ngóh sik kéuih

8) She is going to the State

kéuih heui Méih-Gwok

9) I am eating an apple

ngóh sihk-gán pìhng-gwó

10) I've bought some apples

ngóh máaih-jó dī pìhng-gwó

11) We have to go home

(we have to back home)

ngóh-deih yiu fāan ūk-kéi

2. He seldom beats his son

Subject + adverb + verb + object

📖 Adverb comes before the verb

1) He seldom beats his son

kéuih hóu-síu dá go-jái
he seldom beat MW son

2) They are going together

kéuih deih yāt chàih heui
they together go

3) I'm only going to buy this

ngóh jihng-haih máaih nī-go
I only buy this

- 4) He always gambles
(after “always” very often “also: dōu” will be used)
(both “always” and “also: dōu” are adverbs)

kéuih sīhng-yaht dōu dóu-chín
I always also gamble money

- 5) You are going, well, I am going too

néih heui, gám, ngóh dōu heui
you go, well, I also go

- 6) I will never love you
(I forever also not will love you)

ngóh wíhng-yúhn dōu m̀h wúih jūng-yi néih
I forever also not will love you

- 7) I will certainly come

ngóh yāt-dihng wúih làih
I certainly will come

3. This clothing is very expensive Subject + Predicate

- 1) This clothing is very expensive

nī gihn sām hóu gwai
this MW clothing very expensive

- 2) Newspaper costs \$7

bōu jí chāt mǎn
newspaper 7 dollars

- 3) He is very tall

kéuih hóu gōu
he very tall

- 4) This one is very cheap

nī-go hóu pèhng

- 5) This table is \$1680

nī-jēung tóí yāt-chīn luhk-baak baat-sahp mǎn
this MW table 1 thousand 6 hundred 8 ten dollars

- 6) I am very lazy

ngóh hóu láahn
I very lazy

4. She will go at 3:00 Subject + Time Word + Verb + Object

📖 The time word work as adverbial and therefore is placed before the verb.

- 1) She will go at 3:00

kéuih sām díng heui
She 3 o'clock go

- 2) He resigned yesterday

kéuih chàhm-yaht/kàhm yaht chih-jík
She yesterday resign job

- 3) He will go to interview two days later

kéuih hauh-yaht gin-gūng
She 2 days later see job

4) I am going to Jordan today

ngóh gām-yaht heui Jó-Dēun

📖 Expression indicating ‘A Period of Time’ always follow the verb as this is the complement of duration for an action.

5) She has gone for three hours

kéuih heui-jó sām go jūng
She gone 3 MW hours

6) I went to Central yesterday

ngóh chähm-yaht heui Jūng-Wàahn
I yesterday go Central
(chähm-yaht = kähm-yaht)

7) I have gone to the State last month

ngóh seuhng-go yuht heui jó Méih-Gwok
I last MW month go ed the USA

8) I will buy this book next week

ngóh hah-go láih-baai wúih máaih nī-bún syū
I next week will buy this MW book
(chähm-yaht = kähm-yaht)

5. I work in Central

Subject + Preposition + Place word + Verb + Object

📖 The **prepositional phrase** with place word here word work as adverbial and therefore is placed before the verb.

1) I work in Central

ngóh hái Jūng Wàahn fāan gūng
I at Central back work

2) I bought a dress in Jordan

ngóh hái Jó-Dēun máaih jó yāt-tùh kwàhn
I in Jordan buy ed a MW dress

3) My younger brother studies in Hong Kong University

ngóh sai-lóu hái Hēung-Góng Daaih-Hohk duhk-syū
my younger brother at Hong Kong University study

4) He has lived in Hong Kong for 10 years

kéuih hái Hēung-Góng jjuh-jó sah-pnìhn
he at Hong Kong live ed 10 year

5) My friends lived in Hong Kong for a long time

ngóh pàhng-yáuh hái Hēung-Góng jjuh-jó hóu noi
my friend at Hong Kong live ed very long

6) I work in Tsim Sha Tsui

ngóh hái Jīm-Sā-Jéui fāan gūng
I at TST back work

7) I've worked in this company for four years

ngóh hái nī-gāan gūng-sī jouh-jó sei-nìhn
I at this MW company do ed 4 years

8) I am shopping in Jordan

ngóh hái Jó-Dēun máaih gán yéh
I in Jordan buy ing stuff

📖 If there are the time noun and prepositional phrase with place word, time noun comes first.

9) He will come back from Australia next month

kéuih hah go yuht wúih hái Ou-Jāu fāan-làih
he next MW month will from Australia back come

10) She is cooking in the kitchen now

kéuih yìh-gā hái chyùh-fóng jyú-gán faahn
she now in kitchen room cook ing rice

11) I watched a drama in Culture Centre yesterday

ngóh chàhm-yaht hái Mǎhn-Fa Jūng-Sām tái wá-kehk
I yesterday at Culture Centre watch drama

📖 Exceptions: if “live in ...” is used without a complement which comes after the verb, the adverb of place “in ...” can be put after the verb.

12) I live in Wan Chai

ngóh jyuh hái Wāan Jái
I live in Wan Chai

📖 Of course it can also be put before the verb as all other adverbials:

(I in Wan Chai live)

ngóh hái Wāan Jái jyuh
I in Wan Cha live

6. Open Questions

📖 In English, the question word must be put at the beginning, while in Cantonese, the order of question is the same as that in declarative sentences.

Therefore before you know how to make a question, you must have to know how to make the statement/ answer first. Then just replace the answer with the question word, and adding the question particle at the end, you can get the questions.

(1) What? māt-yéh?

1) What is your name?

(A: I call Peter)

(Q: You call what name?)

A: _____

Q: _____

A: ngóh giu Peter

Q: néih giu māt-yéh méng a?

2) What did you tell her?

(A: I tell her I don't like her)

(Q: You tell her what ?)

A: ngóh tùhng kéuih góng ngóh m̀h jūng-yi kéuih

Q: néih tùhng kéuih góng māt-yéh a?

3) What did you bought?

néih máaih-jó māt yéh a?
you buy ed what PRT?

4) What are you eating?

néih sihk gán māt yéh a?
you eat ing what PRT?

(2) Where? bīn-douh?

1) Where do you work?

(A: I at Central back to work)

(Q: you at where back to work?)

A: _____

Q: _____

A: **ngóh hái Jūng Wàahn fāan gūng**
I at Central back work

Q: **néih hái bīn douh fāan gūng a?**
You at where back work PRT?

2) Where do you go?

(A: I go Happy Valley)

(Q: You go where ?)

A: **ngóh heui Páau-Máh-Déi**

Q: **néih heui bīn (douh)² a?**

3) Where is the toilet?

(A: The toilet is on the 3/F)

(Q: The toilet in where ?)

A: **sái-sáu-gāan hái sām-láu**

Q: **sái-sáu-gāan hái bīn-douh a?**

4) Where does she go?

kéuih heui bīn-(douh) a?
she go where PRT?

5) Where is the kitchen?

chùh-fóng hái bīn-(douh) a?
kitchen at where PRT?

6) Where is the MTR station?

deih-tit jaahm hái bīn-(douh) a?
MTR station at where PRT?

(3) When? géi-sìh?

1) When will she go to Central?

(A: She 3:00 go to Central)

(Q: She when go to Central ?)

A: _____

Q: _____

A: **kéuih tīng yaht heui Jūng Wàahn**
she tomorrow go Central

Q: **kéuih géi sìh heui Jūng Wàahn a?**
she when go Central PRT?

2) What time will you go?

(A: I will 5:15 go)

(Q: You will what time go ?)

A: **ngóh wúih íng-dím sām heui**

Q: **néih wúih géi-dím heui a?**

(when: **géi-sìh** can also be used)

3) When did you come to Hong Kong

(A: I in 1986 came Hong Kong)

(Q: You when came Hong Kong ?)

² “b∞n-douh” is the full form of where, “b∞n” is the short form)

A: ngóh (haih) hái yāt-gáu-baat-luhk nìhn làih Hēung-Góng ge

Q: néih (haih) géi-sìh làih Hēung-Góng ga?

4) When will you go to Park'n shop

néih **géi-sìh** **heui** **Baak-Gāai** **a?**
you when go Park'n PRT?

5) When will you come?

néih **géi-sìh** **laih** **a?**
you when come PRT

6) When will they get married?

kéuih-deih **géi-sìh** **git-fān** **a?**
they when marry PRT?

(4) Who? bīn-go?

1) Who is he?

(A: He is my former husband)

(Q: He is who ?)

A: **kéuih haih** **ngóh chihhn fū**

Q: **kéuih haih** **bīn go** **a?**

2) Who are you?

(A: I am Peter's friend)

(Q: You are who?)

A: ngóh haih **Peter ge pàhng-yáuh** (more formal, use "ge")

Q: néih haih **bīn wái a?** (polite form of the MW for people "wái")

3) Who is coming?

(A: Peter is coming)

(Q: who is coming?)

A: **Peter** **laih gán**

Q: **bīn-go** **laih gán a?**

4) Who is her boy friend?

kéuih **nàahm-pàhng-yáuh** **haih** **bīn** **go** **a?**
her male friend is which MW for people PRT?

5) Who stole my car?

bīn **go** **tāu** **ngóh** **ga** **chē** **a?**
which MW steal my MW car PRT?

6) Who is fatter?

bīn **go** **fèih dī** **a?**
which MW of people fat er PRT

(5) Which? bīn-MW?

1) Which pen is better ?

(A: This pen is better)

(Q: Which pen is better ?)

A: nī-jī bāt hóu-dī

Q: bīn-jī bāt hóu-dī a?

“pen: bāt” can be skipped if it is understood

2) Which kitty more cute?

(A: That kitty is cuter)

(Q: Which kitty is cuter?)

A: gó-jek māau-jái dāk-yi dī

Q: bīn-jek māau-jái dāk-yi dī a?

3) Which pen is longer

bīn jī (bāt) chéuhng dī a?

which MW pen long er PRT?

4) Which pen is yours?

bīn jī (bāt) haih néih ga?

which MW pen be your PRT?

(possessive case, the question particle should be “ga” instead of “a”)

(6) How many? géi-dō?

1) How many people are there in your company?

(A: My company has 260 people)

(Q: Your company has how many people?)

A: ngóh gūng-sī yáuh yih-baak luhk-sahp yàhn

Q: néih gūng-sī yáuh géi-dō yàhn a?

2) What is your telephone number?

(A: My telephone is 22345678)

(Q: Your telephone is how many number?)

A: ngóh dihn-wá haih yih yih sām sei íng luhk chāt baat

Q: néih dihn-wá géi dō houh a?

3) How many people?

géi dō yàhn a?

how many people PRT?

4) How much (money) do you have?

néih yáuh géi dō chín a?

you have how many money PRT?

(7) How long? géi-noih?

1) How long will you stay in Hong Kong?

(A: I will stay in Hong Kong for half an year)

(Q: You will stay in Hong Kong how long ?)

A: **ngóh wúih làuh hái Hēung-Gōng bun nìhn**
Q: **néih wúih làuh hái Hēung-Gōng géi-noih a?**

2) How long have you been married?

(A: I have been married for more than 10 years)

(Q: You have been married how long ?)

A: **ngóh git-jó-fān sah-p-géi-nìhn**

Q: **néih git-jó-fān géi-noih a?**

3) How long has he gone?

kéuih heui-jó géi noih a?
he go ed how long PRT?

7. Yes/No question A-not-A format

1) Will you go ? (Do you go?)

néih heui m̀h heui a? or
you go not go PRT

néih wúih m̀h wúih heui a?
you will not will go PRT

2) Will you come? (Do you come?)

néih làih m̀h làih a? or
you come not come PRT

néih wúih m̀h wúih làih a?
you will not will come PRT

3) Do you like it?

néih jūng m̀h jūng yi a?
you like not like PRT

“like” is “jūng-yi”, to avoid sounds repeat so much, the second syllable of the first “jūng-yi” is skipped.

4) Do you deliver?

sung m̀h sung fo ga ?
deliver not deliver goods PRT?

5) Is it OK?

ōu m̀h ōu kēi a ? (the English “OK” is localized)
O not O K PRT

6) Will you come?

néih làih m̀h làih a?
you come not come PRT?

7) Does it look good?

(looks good is “hóu tái”)

hóu m̀h hóu tái a ?
good not good look PRT

Unit 6 Word order with all Sentence Elements

Usually, the order is:

“Attributive + subject + adverbial + predicate + complement + object”

- 1) My friend has already finished this book

(finished is translated as: read finished)

ngóh	pàhng-yáuh	yíh-gīng	tái	yùhn	nī bún	syū
<i>my</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>already</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>finish</i>	<i>this</i>	<i>book</i>
<i>attributive</i>	<i>subject</i>	<i>adverbial</i>	<i>predicate</i>	<i>complement</i>	<i>attributive</i>	<i>object</i>
<i>pronoun</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>adverb</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>pronoun + MW</i>	<i>noun</i>

- 2) The fat guy arrived at Peter's home at 4:00

(arrived is translated as: go arrived)

go fèih	lóu	sei-dím jūng	heui	dou	Peter	ūk-kéi
<i>MW fat</i>	<i>guy</i>	<i>4:00</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>arrived</i>	<i>Peter</i>	<i>home</i>
<i>attributive</i>	<i>subject</i>	<i>adverbial</i>	<i>predicate</i>	<i>complement</i>	<i>attributive</i>	<i>object</i>
<i>MW + adj</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>noun(time word)</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>pronoun</i>	<i>noun</i>

- 3) The child finished the homework this morning

(finished is translated as: do finished)

go sai-mān-jái	gām jīu	jouh	yùhn	gūng-fo
<i>MW child</i>	<i>this morning</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>finish</i>	<i>homework</i>
<i>attributive</i>	<i>subject</i>	<i>adverbial</i>	<i>predicate</i>	<i>complement</i>
<i>MW</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>noun (time word)</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>verb</i>

- 4) My mother always beats him severely

(“severely” here: gán yiu)

ngóh	mā-mìh	sìhng-yaht	dá kéuih	dá	dāk	hóu gán-yiu
<i>my</i>	<i>mum</i>	<i>always</i>	<i>beat him</i>	<i>beat</i>	<i>LP</i>	<i>very severely</i>
<i>attributive</i>	<i>subject</i>	<i>adverbial</i>	<i>pred. object</i>	<i>pred</i>	<i>LP</i>	<i>complement</i>
<i>pronoun</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>adverb</i>	<i>verb pronoun</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>LP</i>	<i>adverb adjective</i>

- 5) His friend has finished that book last week

kéuih pàhng-yáuh seuhng-go láih-baai tái yùhn gó-bún syū

his friend last MW week read finish that MW book

- 6) The girl has already finished the meal

go	néuih-jái	yíh-gīng	sihk	yùhn	faahn
<i>MW(the)</i>	<i>girl</i>	<i>already</i>	<i>eat</i>	<i>finish</i>	<i>rice</i>

- 7) They have arrived at my home at 11:00

(arrived is translated as: come arrived)

kéuih-deih	sahp-yāt	dím	laih dou	ngóh	ūk-kéi
<i>they</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>o'clock</i>	<i>come arrived</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>home</i>

Unit 7 Prepositional Phrases

Many prepositional phrase works as adverbials and is placed before the action

Prepositional phrase = Preposition + noun

1. I work in Sheung Wan in ... / at ...

1) I work in Sheung Wan

ngóh hái Seuhng-Wàahn fāan-gūng
I at Sheung Wan back work

2) I work in a school

ngóh haih hái hohk-haauh jough-yéh ge
I be at school do thing PRT

3) The children are playing at the balcony

dī sai-mān-jái hái louh tòh wáan-gán
MW children at balcony play ing

2. I have been waiting from 3:00 from ...

1) I have been waiting from 3:00

ngóh yàuh sām díng (jūng) dáng douh yìh-gā/yī-gā
I from 3:00 wait to now

2) I walked from Wan Chai to here

ngóh yàuh Wāan Jái hàahng làih nī-douh
I from Wan Chai walk come here

3) He walked from Sha Tin to Tai Po

ngóh yàuh Sā-Tìhn hàahng heui Daaih-Bou
I from Shatin walk to Tai Po

3. He put the books on the sofa “jēung” sentences

1) He put the books on the sofa

kéuih jēung dī syū fong hái sō-fá douh
he make the books put on sofa 's place

2) He sent the robber to the police station

kéuih jēung go cháak sung heui chāai-gún
he make the robber send to police station

3) They broke the things completely

kéuih-deih jēung dī-yéh jing laahn saai
they make the stuff make broken all

4) Please translate this passage into English

nh gōi jēung nī-pīn mán yihk jough Yīng-Mán ā
please make this MW passage translate to be English PRT

4. I am beaten by my mum by ...

1) I am beat by my mum

ngóh béi mā-mìh dá
I by mother beat

2) My money was being stolen

ngóh dī chín béi yàhn tāu-jó
my MW money by people steal ed

- 3) He was being played tricks

kéuih béi yàhn jing gú
he by people \play tricks\

- 4) The dog is stolen by him

jek gáu béi kéuih tāu-jó
MW (the) dog by him steal ed

5. He is much smarter than you compare to ...

- 1) He is much smarter than you

kéuih béi néih lēk hóu-dō
he compare to you smart much

- 2) The things in this shop is much cheaper than those in that one

nī-gāan pou-táu béi gó-gāan pèhng hóu-dō
this MW shop compare to that MW cheap much

- 3) He is 10 marks higher than me (in exam)

kéuih béi ngóh dō sah p fān
he compare to me more 10 marks

- 4) He is 3 pounds heavier than you

kéuih béi néih chúhng sām bohng
he compare to you heavy 3 pounds

6. He told me with ...

- 1) He told me

kéuih tūhng ngóh góng
he with me speak

- 2) My friend told me she is unhappy

ngóh pàhng-yáuh tūhng ngóh góng kéuih hóu mē hōi-sām
my friend with me speak she very not happy

- 3) She told me that she lose lots of money in horse racing

kéuih tūhng ngóh góng kéuih dóu-máh syū-jó hóu-dō chín
she with me speak she gamble horse lose ed much money

- 4) I told them

ngóh tūhng kéuih-deih góng
I with them speak

Unit 8 A verb takes 2 objects

📖 When a verb can take 2 objects, there will be a problem about the sequence of the two objects.

In English, usually the indirect object comes first and then the direct object, however in Cantonese, sometimes the direct object comes first.

1. He gives money to me ...give something to somebody

📖 When talking about “give” the direct object “money” must come first. The indirect object “me” must come after.

1) He gives money to me

kéuih béi chín ngóh
he give money me

2) Please give me a glass of water

m̀h gōi béi b̀i séui ngóh ā
please give glass water me PRT

3) He gave me the letter

kéuih béi fūng seun ngóh
he gave MW(the) letter me

2. My friend teaches me Cantonese ...teach somebody something

📖 Here, the indirect object “me” must come first and the direct object “Cantonese” comes after.

1) My friend teaches me Cantonese

ngóh p̀hng-yáuh gaau ngóh Gwóng Dūng Wá
my friend teach me Cantonese

2) I teach her Spanish

ngóh gaau kéuih Sāi-Bāan-Ngàh mán
I teach her Spain language

3) I teach her English

ngóh gaau kéuih Yīng-Mán
I teach her English

Unit 9 A Verb takes a comp. and an object

📖 A verb can take both complement and object at the same time. Because both the complement and object comes after the verb, the position of the complement and object may be confusing to learners

1. Verb + Comp + Object

(1) For Complement of result

I saw Peter

📖 A complement of result tells the result of an action

1) I saw Peter

ngóh gin dóu Peter
I saw successfully Peter

2) I can't saw Peter.

ngóh gin m̀h dóu Peter
I saw not successfully Peter

3) He saw Peter this morning

kéuih gām jīu gin dóu Peter
he this morning see COMP Peter

4) They heard some sound

kéuih deih tēng dóu dī sēng
they hear successfully some sound

5) Sorry, I can't hear what you said

m̀h-hóu yi-si, ngóh tēng m̀h dóu néih góng māt-yéh
they , I hear not successfully you say what

6) He is standing at the bus-stop

kéuih kéih hái³ bā-sí jaahm douh
he stand being at there bus stop's place

7) They are not standing over there

kéuih-deih m̀h haih kéih hái gó-douh
they not stand at there

8) He learnt driving

kéuih hohk sīk jā chē
he learn know drive car

9) I've learnt Cantonese for 1 year, however I still can't speak Cantonese

ngóh hohk-jó Gwóng-Dūng-Wá yāt-nìhn ,
I learn ed Cantonese 1 year ,
daahn-haih dōu hohk m̀h sīk
however still learnt not know

10) Please open the door

m̀h-gōi dá hōi douh m̀hn ā
please action of open the state of open MW(the) door PRT

11) The door didn't open

douh m̀hn móuh dá hōi
MW(the) door not action of open the state of open e

12) The door is too tight, I can't open it.

douh m̀hn taai saht, ngóh dá m̀h hōi
MW(the) door too tight, I open not the state of open

³ h³i: being at there due to the action of standing

13) He watched this movie the day before yesterday

kéuih ch̀ihn-yaht tái ỳuhn nī-tou hei
he the day before yesterday read finished this MW movie

14) He finished the book yesterday

kéuih chàhm-yaht tái ỳuhn gó-bún-syū
he yesterday read finished that MW book

15) I'm sorry, I didn't finish the book today, is there any problem if I return it to you tomorrow?

m̀h-hóu yi-si, ngóh gām-yaht meih tái ỳuhn b́un-syū
sorry, I today not yet read finished the book
t̀ing-yaht s̀in wàahn-fāan béi néih yáuh-móuh mahn-tàih a?
tomorrow then return back to you have not have problem PRT?

16) I think I can't finish this book this week!

ngóh nám ngóh nī-go láih-baai
I think I this week
d̀ou-haih tái m̀h ỳuhn nī-bún syū
still read not finish this MW book

(2) For Directional complement

She came back home

📖 A directional complement tells the direction of an action

1) She came back home

kéuih fāan làih ũk-kéi
she back come home

2) You go out (no object are in this example)

néih ch̀eūt heui
you out go

3) He just came back (no object are in this example)

kéuih jhng wah fāan làih
he just back come

4) She will go out at 2:00 (no object are in this example)

kéuih léuhng-dím ch̀eūt heui
she 2:00 out go

5) Please come in

yahp làih ā
in come PRT

6) She will go back to the State (She will fly to the State)

kéuih wúih fēi heui Méih Gwok
he will fly to the USA

7) My father wants to come back to Hong Kong

ngóh bàh-bā séung fāan làih Hēung-Góng
I father want back come Hong Kong

(3) For potential complement

He can learn driving

📖 A potential complement tells the possibility of an action taking place. It is formed with the linking particle “dāk” insert between a verb and a resultive or directional complement.

1) You are so smart, you can learn driving planes definitely.

néih gam lēk, yāt-dihng hohk dāk sīk jā fēi-gēi ge
you so smart, definite learn can know drive planes PRT
(he has the capability of learning how to drive, maybe he still hasn't learnt it yet)

- 2) He's so stupid, definitely he can't learn driving

kéuih gam chéun, yāt-dihng hohk m̀h sīk jā chē
he so stupid, definite learn not know drive car

- 3) I can understand your Cantonese

ngóh tēng dāk m̀hng néih ge Gwóng-Dūng-Wá
I listen can understand your Cantonese

- 4) I'm sorry, you speak too fast. I can't understand.

m̀h-hóu yi-si, néih góng-dāk taai faai, ngóh tēng m̀h m̀hng
sorry, you speak LP too fast, I hear not understand

- 5) I can see the blackboard clearly

ngóh tái dāk chīng go hāak-báan
I see can clear MW(the) blackboard
(I've worn the glasses and I have the capability to see it clearly)

- 6) I haven't worn glasses, I can't see the subtitles clearly

ngóh móuh daai ngáahn-géng, tái m̀h chīng chó dī jih-mohk
I not wear spectacles, see not clear the subtitle
(I've worn the glasses and I have the capability to see it clearly)

- 7) I can finished that book tomorrow

ngóh tīng-yaht tái dāk yùhn gó-bún-syū
I tomorrow read LP(can) finished that book

- 8) She can come back to Hong Kong

kéuih fāan dāk làih Hēung-Góng
she back LP (can) come Hong Kong
or:

kéuih hó-yíh fāan làih Hēung-Góng
she can back come Hong Kong
("hó-yíh" is an auxiliary verb but not a complement)

- 9) The loan sharks are looking for her, so she can't come back to Hong Kong.

dī daaih-yíh-lūng wán-gán kéuih,
the big ear hole (loan shark) looking her,
só-yíh kéuih m̀h fāan dāk làih Hēung-Góng
therefore she not back can come Hong Kong
or:
só-yíh kéuih m̀h hó-yíh fāan làih Hēung-Góng
she can not can back come Hong Kong

- 10) You can go out there

néih chēut dāk heui gó-douh
you out LP(can) go there
or:
néih hó-yíh chēut heui gó-douh
you can out go there

- 11) Mummy said you can't go out there.

mā-mìh wah néih m̀h chēut dāk heui gó-douh
mummy say you not out can go there
or
mā-mìh wah néih m̀h hó-yíh chēut heui gó-douh
mummy said you can't can out go there

2. Verb + Object + Verb + Comp

(1) For complement of degree

She types very slowly

- 📖 It indicate the degree or extent of an action or a thing

- 1) She types very slow

kéuih dá jih dá dāk hóu maahn

she type character type LP very slow
As a habit, one can also say:

kéuih dá jih hóu maahn

she type character very slow

- 2) He drives very fast

kéuih jā chē jā dāk hóu faai

he drive car drive LP very fast

- 3) He does his homework very poor

kéuih jōuh gūng fo jōuh dāk hóu chā

he do homework do LP very poor

- 4) She is very good at playing piano

kéuih tàahn gong-kàhm tàahn dāk hóu lēk

she play piano play LP very well

3. Verb + Object + Comp

(1) Frequency complement

- 📖 It shows the frequency of an action

I've been to Hong Kong twice

- 1) I've come to Hong Kong twice

ngóh làih-gwo Hēung-Góng léuhng-chi

I come EXP Hong Kong 2 time
(one may say "ngóh làih-gwo yāt-chí Hēung-Góng", however it's not very common)

- 2) They only saw their daddy once.

kéuih-deih jihng-haih gin-gwo kéuih-deih ge dē-dih yāt-chi

they only see EXP their daddy one time

- 3) I've been to the Golden Coast many times

ngóh heui gwo Wòhng-Gām Hóì-Ńgohn hóu-dō chi

I go EXP gold coast many time

(2) Duration Complement

I've come to Hong Kong for 3 years

- 📖 It tells how long an action or state lasts

- 1) She didn't eat any food for 2 days

kéuih móuh sihk-yéh léuhng yaht

she didn't have eat stuff 2 days
In negative, the duration can be put before the verb and form with the móuh to form an adverbial.

kéuih léuhng yaht móuh sihk-yéh

she 2 days didn't have eat stuff

- 2) I've come to Hong Kong for 3 years

ngóh làih-jó Hēung-Góng sāam nìhn

I come ed Hong Kong 3 years

(3) Quantity Complement

I'm 3 inches taller than him

- 1) I'm 3 inches taller than him

ngóh gōu gwo kéuih sāam chyun

I tall than him 3 inches
another sentence pattern:

ngóh béi kéuih gōu sāam chyun

I compare him tall 3 inches

- 2) I'm 5 cm taller than him

ngóh gōu gwo kéuih íng cm (English for “cm”)

*I tall than him 5 cm
another sentence pattern:*

ngóh bái kéuih gōu íng cm

I compare him tall 5 cm

- 3) Peter is much fatter than David

Peter fèih gwo David hóu dō

*Peter fat than David much
another sentence pattern:*

Peter bái David fèih hóu dō

Peter compare David fat much

- 4) Mary is a bit prettier than Kelly

Mary leng gwo Kelly síu síu

*Mary pretty than Kelly a bit
another sentence pattern:*

Mary bái Kelly leng síu síu

Mary compare Kelly pretty a bit

4. Verb + Object 1 + Comp + Object 2

He gives flowers to Mary

- 1) He gives flowers to Mary

kéuih sung fā bái Mary

he give flower to Mary

- 2) My friend lend money to me

ngóh pàhng-yáuh je chin bái ngóh

My friend lend money to me

Unit 10 Daily Useful Expressions

- 📖 What a beginning learner learns may be some daily useful expressions. However quite often, the way that people say just a kind of habit you can't tell why people say in this way, using these words and in this word order.

Then it's better for you to just remember them instead of trying to know the logic in it.

1. The way that people say

- 📖 For example, an English learner may not understand “How about I give you a lift?” means “How about I drive you?”. The learner may think “a lift” is so heavy and how can people give it to somebody!

- 1) May I have your honourable surname?

*gwai sing a?
honourable surname PRT?*

- 2) I wish you good (usage = Nice to meet you)

*néih hóu
you good*

2. The words that people use

- 📖 It's not common to say “Merry new year” and “Happy Christmas”. As a habit, people say “Merry Christmas” and “Happy New Year”.

- 1) Good morning

jóu sàhn

early morning

(“jiu” also means “morning” or “dawn”, however people never use “jiu” here)

3. The word order

Due to the way that what people say maybe different from your own language, the word order maybe out of your expectation

1) Happy birthday

sāang-yaht faai lohk (set expressions)

birthday happy

What we learnt in the previous chapters is the modifier “happy: faai-lohk” should comes before what it modifies “birthday: sāang-yaht”, however it’s reverse here. It’s because Cantonese say “I hope your birthday will be happy instead of saying “happy birthday” here

2) Today, I have a very happy birthday (a made statement)

gām-yaht, ngóh yáuh yāt-go hóu hōi-sām ge sāang-yaht

today, I have I MW very happy LP birthday

This sentence matches with what we’ve learnt as “happy: hōi-sām” comes before “birthday: sāang-yaht”)

Generally, “happy” should be “hōi sām”, “faai lohk” is very formal and mainly used in some set expression such as “sāang-yaht faai- lohk”.

Unit 11 Glossaries: English to Cantonese

a	(yāt) + MW	baby	bìh bī
about	daaih koi	back	①come back: fāan, ②the back of a body: bui, ③behind: hauh bihn
add	gā	balcony	louh tòih
afraid	gēng	be	haih
after	hauh, jī hauh	beat	dá
all	só yáuh, chyùhn bouh	because	yān waih
already	yíh gīng	before	chìhn, jī chìhn
also	dōu	belong	suhk yū
always	sìhng yaht	big	daaih
am	haih	birthday	sāang yaht
American	①Méih Gwok ②American style: méih sīk	bit	síu síu
and	tùhng, tùhng màaih	blackboard	hāak báan
another	lihng ngoih yāt MW	body	sān tái
answer	◆verb: daap, ◆noun: daap on	book	text books/books with content printed: syū, blank books for writing: bóu, verb: dehng, book keeping: bouh gei
apple	pìhng gwó	both	léuhng jé
arrive	dou	boy	①nàahm jái, ②boy friend: nàahm pàhng yáuh
arrogant	jih daaih	brave	yúhng gám
as	similar: hóu chíh	break	①to break: jíng waaih,
at	háih		
Australia	Ou Jāu		
away	to leave: lèih hōi		

	jíng laahn, ㉔broken ♦functional: waaih, ♦physical damage: laahn; ㉔break up ♦disassemble: chaak		
bring	daai	Christmas	Sing Daan Jit
brother	㉑hīng daih, ㉒elder brother: gòh gō, ㉓younger brother: sai lóu	city	sìhng síh
bus	bā sí	clean	㉑gōn jehng, ㉒to clean: chīng git, ㉓to wipe: maat
but	daahn haih	clear	chīng chó
buy	máaih	clever	chūng mìngh
by	sign of passive: béi	cloth	bou
can	♦capable of doing sth: sīk, ♦permitted to: hó yíh	clothes	clothing in general for the top: sāam
Canada	Gā Nàh Daaih	clumsy	leuhn jeuhn
Cantonese	Gwóng Dūng Wá	coast	ngohn, hói ngohn
car	chē	colleague	tùhng sih
careful	síu sām	come	làih
Central	Jūng Wàahn	comics	maahn wá
certain	yāt dihng	common	póu tūng
change	gói	COMP	abbr.: Complement
character	jih	company	gūng sī
cheap	pèhng	compare	béi / béi gaau
cheat	āak	complete	yùhn chyùhn
child	sai mǎn jái	concurrent job	gīm-jīk
China	Jūng Gwok	cook	㉑jyú, jyún faahn, ㉒a cook: chyùh sī
Chinese	♦style: jūng sīk,	correctly	āam
		course	fo chihng (M: go)
		cross	gwo

cry	㉑with tears: haam, ㉒shout: giu	earn	jaahn
Culture Centre cup	Mǎhn-Fa Jūng-Sām būi	eat	sihk
cute	dāk yi	English	♦people: Yīng Gwok yàhn, ♦language: Yīng Mán
daddy	dē dīh	even	juhng, even more: juhng, gang gā
daughter	néui	example	laih jí, laih yùh
day	yaht	EXP	abbr.: Experiential Aspect Marker
deliver	sung fo	expensive	gwai
die	séi	fall	dit
diligent	kàhn lihk	family	♦casual: ūk kéi, ♦formal: gā tīhng
dirty	wū jōu	fast	faai
do	jouh	fat	fèih
dog	gáu	father	bàh bā, dē dīh
doll	gūng jái	festival	jit, jit yaht
dollar	mǎn	fine	hóu
dolphin	hói tyùhn	finish	yùhn
don't	mh	finished	jouh yùhn
door	mùhn	flower	fā
drama	wá kehk	fly	㉑verb: fēi, ㉒the insect: wū yīng
draw	㉑waahk, ㉒draw money: tàih chín	food	yéh sihk
dress	㉑a dress: kwàhn, ㉒put on clothing: jeuk	foolish	chéun
drive	jā chē	foreigner	ngoih gwok yàhn
ear	yíh	forever	wíhng yúhn
early	jóu		

<i>forget</i>	m̀h gei dāk		faahn				
<i>four</i>	sei	<i>he</i>	kéuih	<i>husband</i>	♦sīn sāang(polite), ♦lóuh gūng(casual)	<i>lady</i>	Ⓛgirl: néuih jái, Ⓜaddress a lady: síu jé
<i>frank</i>	táan baahk, lóuh saht	<i>health</i>	♦gihn hōng, ♦usually people say	<i>I</i>	ngóh	<i>language</i>	yú yìhn
<i>friend</i>	pàhng yáuh			<i>ice</i>	bīng	<i>last</i>	Ⓛprevious: seuhng, Ⓜthe end: jeui méih
<i>from</i>	yàuh	<i>hear</i>	tēng	<i>ice-cream</i>	syut gōu	<i>late</i>	chìh
<i>front</i>	chìhn bihn	<i>heavy</i>	chúhng	<i>if</i>	yùh gwó	<i>laugh</i>	siu
<i>gamble</i>	dóu chín	<i>her</i>	kéuih	<i>in</i>	at: hái, enter: yahp	<i>lazy</i>	láahn
<i>German</i>	♦people: Dāk Gwok yàhn, ♦language: Dāk Mán	<i>here</i>	nī douh	<i>inches</i>	chyun	<i>learn</i>	hohk
		<i>him</i>	kéuih	<i>ing</i>	gán	<i>leave</i>	jáu, lèih hōi
<i>get</i>	Ⓛló, līng, Ⓜget off: lohk	<i>his</i>	kéuih ge	<i>interesting</i>	dāk yi, hóu wáan	<i>left</i>	Ⓛleft side: jó bihn, Ⓜverb: jáu, lèih hōi
<i>girl</i>	Ⓛnéuih jái, Ⓜgirl friend: néuih pàhng yáuh	<i>hole</i>	lūng	<i>interview</i>	gin gūng, mihn si	<i>lend</i>	je
		<i>home</i>	ūk kái	<i>into</i>	yahp heui	<i>less</i>	síu dī
<i>give</i>	Ⓛbéi, Ⓜgive back the change: jáau	<i>homework</i>	gūng fo	<i>it</i>	kéuih	<i>letter</i>	seun (M: fūng)
		<i>Hong Kong</i>	Hēung Góng	<i>Japan</i>	Yaht Bún	<i>like</i>	jūng yi
<i>glass</i>	Ⓛcup: búi, Ⓜglass material: bō lēi	<i>hope</i>	hēi mohng	<i>Japanese</i>	♦people: yaht bún yàhn, ♦language: yaht mán	<i>listen</i>	tēng
<i>go</i>	heui, go out: chēut heui	<i>horse</i>	Ⓛmáh, Ⓜhorse racing: páau máh	<i>job</i>	gūng (M: fahn), gūng jok	<i>little</i>	Ⓛhóu síu, Ⓜa little bit: síu síu
<i>gold</i>	gām	<i>hospital</i>	yī yūn	<i>Jordan</i>	Jó Dēun	<i>live</i>	jyuh
<i>Golden Coast</i>	Wòhng Gām Hóí Ngohn	<i>hot</i>	yiht	<i>jump</i>	tiu	<i>loan</i>	borrow money: je chín
<i>good</i>	Ⓛhóu, Ⓜgood value: dái	<i>hour</i>	jūng (tòuh)	<i>June</i>	luhk yuht	<i>long</i>	Ⓛchēuhng Ⓜlong winded: chēuhng hei
<i>goods</i>	fo (maht)	<i>house</i>	ūk	<i>just</i>	Ⓛjust before: āam āam / jing wah, Ⓜjust only: jihng haih	<i>look</i>	Ⓛmohng, Ⓜlook for: wán
<i>guy</i>	lóu	<i>how?</i>	ⓁQty: géi, Ⓜthe way: díng (yéung), Ⓜhow about ...?... hóu m̀h	<i>kill</i>	animals: tōng	<i>lose</i>	m̀h gin
<i>half</i>	bun		hóu, Ⓜhow long?: géi	<i>kitchen</i>	chyùh fóng	<i>lots</i>	dō
<i>hand</i>	sáu		noih, Ⓜhow many?: géi	<i>kitty</i>	baby cat: māau jái	<i>love</i>	♦formal: oi, ♦casual
<i>happy</i>	hōi sām	<i>however</i>	dō	<i>know</i>	jī dou		
<i>have</i>	Ⓛyáuh, have to: yiu, Ⓜhave a meal: sihk	<i>hundred</i>	daahn haih baak				

	(more common): jūng yi	mother	mā mih
LP	abbr.: Linking Particle	Mother's day	Móuh Chān Jit
mainland	daaih luhk	movie	①hei (MW: tou, chēut), ②movie star: mihng
make	♦jouh, ♦make by hand: jǐng, ♦in a slang way: gáau	MTR	sīng
male	nàahm	Much	deih tit
man	nàahm yán	mum	hóu dō
many	dō	MW	mā mih
marry	git fān	my	abbr.: Measure Word
may	permitted to do sth: hó yíh	name	ngóh ge
May	ímh yuht	naughty	méng
me	ngóh	never	yáih
meal	chāan	New Zealand newspaper	chùhng lòih mēh
mean	①equal to: jīk haih, ②meaning: yi sī	next	Náu Sāi Làahn
milk	náaih	nice	bou jí
milk tea	náaih chàh	not	gaak lèih
mine	ngóh ge	①personality: hóu, hóu yàhn, ②look nice: leng	①don't: mēh, ②be not: mēh, ③not yet: meih, ④don't have: móuh
money	chín	now	yìh gā
month	①yuht, ②this month: nī go yuht, ③last month: seuhng go yuht, ④next month: hah go yuht	number	♦houh máh, ♦transliteration: nām bá
more	dō dī	o'clock	đím
morning	jīu jóu	offend	dāk jeuìh
most	①jeui ②most probably: dō sou	office	♦baahn gūng sāt, sé jih làuh, ♦usually people say

often	sìhng yaht	please	mēh gōi
once	yāt chi	police	①gíng chaat, ②police station: chāai gún
one	yāt	poor	①inferior: chā, ②no money: kùhng
only	jihng-haih	pound	bohng
open	①hōi, ②opening hours: hōi fong sìh gaan	practice	lihn jaahp
or	dihng, waahk jé	pretty	leng
order	①command: mihng lihng, ②order food in a restaurant: giu	problem	mahn tàih
our	ngóh deih ge	PRT	abbr.: Modal Particles
out	①chēut, ②out of order, waaih	puppy	gáu jái
overtime	gā bāan	put	①take: líng, ló, ②place: fong
parent	fuh móuh	question	mahn tàih
Paris	Bā Làih	quite	géi
Park'n shop part	Baak Gāai	rain	①verb, raining: loh yúh, ②noun, the rain: yúh
passage	①a part: bouh fahn, ②to part a place: gaan	read	tái
pen	mán (MW: pīn)	real	jān haih
person	①bāt, ②pencil case: bāt háp	really	jān haih
piano	yàhn, yán	research	yìhn gau
pick	gong kàhm	resign	chìh jīk
place(verb)	jāp	responsible	fuh jaak
play	jāi	return sth back	wàahn
	①wáan, ②playing tricks: jíng gú	rice	♦cooked rice: faahn, ♦uncooked rice: máih
		road	louh, máh louh

<i>robber</i>	cháak	<i>slow</i>	maahn	<i>studies</i>	duhk syū	<i>there</i>	gó douh
<i>room</i>	fóng	<i>small</i>	①sai, ②small change: sáan jí	<i>study</i>	wān syū	<i>therefore</i>	só yíh
<i>salary</i>	yàhn gūng	<i>smart</i>	lēk	<i>stuff</i>	yéh	<i>they</i>	kéuih deih
<i>say</i>	wah, góng	<i>so</i>	gam	<i>stupid</i>	chéun	<i>thing</i>	yéh
<i>school</i>	①hohk haauh, ②school bag: syū bāau, ③primary school: síu hohk, ④secondary school: jūng hohk, ⑤university: daaih hohk	<i>sofa</i>	sō fá	<i>subject</i>	fō, fō muhk	<i>think</i>	nám
<i>scold</i>	laauh	<i>some</i>	yāt dī	<i>subtitle</i>	jih mohk	<i>this</i>	nī + MW
<i>see</i>	gin	<i>sometimes</i>	yáuh sīh	<i>successfully</i>	complement: dóu	<i>those</i>	gó dī
<i>seem</i>	①tái làih, ②seems like: hóu chíh	<i>son</i>	jái	<i>summer</i>	①hah tīn, ②summer holiday: syú ga	<i>thousand</i>	chīn
<i>seldom</i>	hóu síu	<i>sorry</i>	m̀h-hóu yi-si	<i>surname</i>	sing	<i>three</i>	sāam
<i>send</i>	sung	<i>sound</i>	sēng	<i>swim</i>	yàuh séui	<i>ticket</i>	fēi
<i>severe</i>	yìhm lai, yìhm juhng	<i>Spain</i>	Sāi Bāan Ngàh	<i>table</i>	tói	<i>time</i>	①sìh gaan, ②freq.: chi
<i>Sha Tin</i>	Sā Tīhn	<i>Spanish</i>	♦people: Sāi Bāan Ngàh yàhn, ♦language: Sāi Bāan Ngàh Mán	<i>Tai Po</i>	Daaih Bou	<i>tired</i>	guih
<i>Shatin</i>	Sā Tīhn	<i>speak</i>	góng	<i>take</i>	①carry: ló, ②transportation: daap	<i>to</i>	heui
<i>she</i>	kéuih	<i>speaker</i>	góng jé	<i>talk</i>	góng	<i>today</i>	gām yaht
<i>Sheung Wan</i>	Seuhng Wàahn	<i>spend</i>	①spend money: sái, ②use: yuhng	<i>tall</i>	gōu	<i>together</i>	yāt chàih
<i>shop</i>	pou táu	<i>stand</i>	kéih	<i>teach</i>	gaau	<i>toilet</i>	①wash room: sái sáu gāan (elegant, used with strangers), ②toilet: chi
<i>shopping</i>	máaih yéh	<i>state</i>	①country: gwok gā, ②the USA: Méih Gwok	<i>telephone</i>	dihn wá	<i>tomorrow</i>	tīng yaht
<i>short</i>	♦in height: ái, ♦in length: dyún	<i>station</i>	jaahm	<i>tell</i>	góng	<i>tonight</i>	gām máahn
<i>should</i>	yīng gōi	<i>stay</i>	lauh	<i>ten</i>	①sahp, ②ten thousand: maahn	<i>too</i>	taai
<i>sit</i>	chóh	<i>steal</i>	tāu	<i>than</i>	over: gwo	<i>toy</i>	wuhn geuih
<i>skip</i>	tiu	<i>still</i>	juhng	<i>that</i>	gó + MW	<i>translate</i>	yihk, fāan yihk
<i>sleep</i>	fan gaau	<i>stop</i>	tīhng	<i>the</i>	MW	<i>travel</i>	léuih hàhng
		<i>stubborn</i>	gu jāp	<i>them</i>	kéuih deih	<i>Tsim Sha Tsui</i>	Jīm Sā Jéui
		<i>student</i>	hohk sāang	<i>then</i>	gān jyuh	<i>Tuesday</i>	lái, baai yih

<i>TV</i>	dihn sih	<i>we</i>	ngóh deih
<i>twice</i>	léuhng chi	<i>wear</i>	jeuk
<i>two</i>	yih	<i>weather</i>	tīn hei
<i>type</i>	①to type: dá jih, ②kind: júng (leuih)	<i>week</i>	①láih baai, ②this week: nī go láih baai, ③last week: seuhng go láih baai, ④next week: hah go láih baai
<i>typing</i>	dá jih	<i>well</i>	①a well: jéng, ②good: hóu, ③interjection: gám
<i>understand</i>	mǐhng	<i>what</i>	①māt yéh, ②what time: géi díng
<i>unhappy</i>	m̄h hōi sām	<i>when</i>	①in a statement: dōng, ②in a question: géi sìh
<i>up</i>	héi	<i>where</i>	bīn douh
<i>USA</i>	Méih Gwok	<i>which</i>	bīn MW
<i>use</i>	yuhng	<i>who</i>	bīn go?
<i>usually</i>	tūng seuhng	<i>will</i>	wúih
<i>Vancouver</i>	Wān Gō Wàh	<i>window</i>	chēung
<i>very</i>	hóu	<i>wipe</i>	maat
<i>visit</i>	①friends: taam, ②museums: chāam gūn, ③a president visit another country, a reporter interview a famous person: fóng mahn	<i>wish</i>	hēi mohng, jūk
<i>wait</i>	dáng	<i>with</i>	tùhng
<i>walk</i>	hàahng	<i>work</i>	①back to work: fāan gūng, ②do: jough
<i>wallet</i>	ngàhn bāu	<i>yawn</i>	dá haam louh
<i>Wanchai</i>	Wāan Jái	<i>year</i>	①nìhn, ②this year: gām nín, ③last year: gauh nín, seuhng nín, ④next year: chēut nín, years old: seui
<i>want</i>	séung		
<i>watch</i>	①to watch: tái, wrist watch: sáu bīu (M: jek)		
<i>water</i>	séui		

<i>yesterday</i>	kàhm yaht		◆plural: néih deih ge
<i>yet</i>	(juhng) meih	<i>yours</i>	singular: néih ge, plural: néih deih ge
<i>you</i>	◆singular: néih, ◆plural: néih deih		
<i>your</i>	◆singular: néih ge,		

Word Order

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The end of the book
