



Quick Chinese Lessons
by That's Mandarin

Lesson 2



1. Simple Sentence Structures

If you are a beginner, these 4 structures will help you avoid making mistakes when you build simple Chinese sentences:

STRUCTURE 1

Subject + Verb + Object



我去学校。

Wǒ qù xuéxiào.

I'm going to school.

Literally: I go to school.

STRUCTURE 2

Subject + Time + Verb + Object



我八点去学校。

Wǒ bā diǎn qù xuéxiào.

I go to school at 8 o'clock.

Literally: I at 8 o'clock go to school.

STRUCTURE 3

Subject + **Place** + Verb + Object



我在家吃晚饭。

Wǒ zài jiā chī wǎnfàn.

I have dinner at home.

Literally: I at home eat dinner.

STRUCTURE 4

Subject + **Time** + **Place** + Verb + Object



我六点半在家吃晚饭。

Wǒ liù diǎn bàn zài jiā chī wǎnfàn.

I have dinner at home at 6:30.

Literally: I at 6.30 at home eat dinner.

2. How to Ask Basic Questions

Many Chinese learners are told that **吗 (ma)** is used at the end to form a question. However, this is not always correct even when creating basic questions.

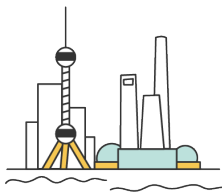
STRUCTURE

Sentence + **吗 (ma)** + ?

吗 (ma) needs to be added at the end of a yes-no question only. For questions like “Where are you?”, “What time is it?”, there is no need to add **吗 (ma)**.

Let's have a look at some examples.

1. For **yes-no** questions; use **吗 (ma)**:



你喜欢上海**吗**?

Nǐ xǐhuan Shànghǎi **ma**?

Do you like Shanghai?



他有中文名字**吗**?

Tā yǒu Zhōngwén míngzi **ma**?

Does he have a Chinese name?

2. For **other types** of questions (who? what? why? where?), do not add **吗 (ma)**:



你在**哪里**?

Nǐ zài **nǎlǐ**?

Where are you?

In our future lessons, we will learn more about different types of questions.

3. How to Use Negatives 不 (Bù) and 没 (Méi)

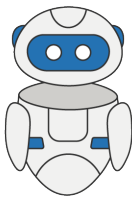
With the verb “to have”

In Chinese, both 不 (bù) and 没 (méi) can be used to negate a verb.

But when it comes to the verb 有 (yǒu), “to have”, you can only use 没 (méi) to say “not to have”.

STRUCTURE:

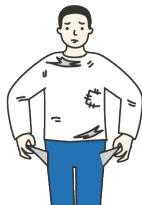
Subject + 没有 (méi yǒu) + Noun



我没有女朋友。

Wǒ méi yǒu nǚpéngyou.

I don't have a girlfriend.



我没有钱。

Wǒ méi yǒu qián.

I don't have any money.

NEVER EVER say 不有 (bù yǒu)! There is NO such word.

With other verbs

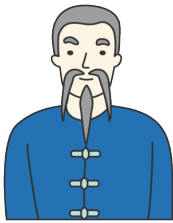
It's also important to understand how to use 不 (bù) and 没 (méi) with other verbs.

1. 不 (bù)

不 (bù) + verb is used for negation of present and future actions.

STRUCTURE:

Subject + 不 (bù) + Verb



我不去学校。

Wǒ bù qù xuéxiào.

I don't go to school. /

I am not going to school.



我不吃早饭。

Wǒ bù chī zǎofàn.

I don't eat breakfast. /

I am not going to eat breakfast.

2. 没有 (méi yǒu)

没有 (méi yǒu) + verb is used for negation of **past actions**.

Using 有 (yǒu) in this case is optional.

STRUCTURE:

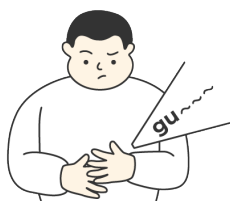
Subject + 没 (méi) + 有 (yǒu) + Verb



昨天我**没(有)**去学校。

Zuótiān wǒ méi(yǒu) qù xuéxiào.

Yesterday I didn't go to school.



今天我**没(有)**吃早饭。


Jīntiān wǒ méi(yǒu) chī zǎofàn.

I didn't have breakfast today.

Next Steps

We hope you've enjoyed our second lesson!

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