

## Greetings!

Y: Perfect Chinese your way, in only five minutes a day. Welcome to Chinese Studio, a brand new Chinese learning program on China Radio International. I'm Yajie.

Cam: Hi, everyone, I'm Cam. This daily show will teach Chinese at the elementary level, which is very appropriate, considering I'm just starting to learn myself! Hi Yajie, may I have the honour of suggesting our first topic?

Cam: Sorry... I was kidding. I guess it's too soon for that! In fact, the first thing I wanna learn is all about greetings. How to say hello?

Y: I think it is also where most foreigners want to start learning Chinese. Now let's check Key words of the day!

### Key words of the day

Today we'll learn a few of popular expressions of greeting. 你好, Cam. 你好, ... 您好, Director. 你好. Hi, Cam, 你好吗? 我很好. 谢谢! All in today's Chinese Studio.

Y: In Chinese there are several different ways to say hello. The most popular expression is 你好. It means 'hi' or 'hello' and can be used at any time, on any occasion and by anybody. It can be used on either a stranger or a person you've already known.

Cam: When somebody says 你好 to you, what should you reply?

(converstation)

Y: Right, your reply should be same - 你好. 你 means 'you'. 好 means 'good'. Together 'you-good': 你好.

Cam: The pronunciation of 你 is similar to that of the English word 'knee', and 好 similar to 'how'.

Y: But the tone is totally different. That's because Chinese is a tonal language. It has four basic tones.



Cam: That's what I always have a problem with. It's so confusing!

Y: Don't worry. We'll have plenty chances to practice the tones in the future.

Cam: 你好 means 'Hi, hello'. Actually 'Hi' is also used in Chinese to make a greeting. So when you forget how to say hello in Chinese, it still works if you say 嗨. The reply can be same.

Y: 嗨 can be used on anybody, at any time, like 你好. And both of them are very casual expressions. So when greeting someone older, or, in a formal manner, we usually say Nin Hao. Nin is the polite form of 你。

Y: Of course, after you say Nin Hao, you won't expect the same words as a reply. Actually the reply can be 你好, or simply a nod.

C: If you want to greet somebody you have already known, you can also say 你好吗?  
Remember, like the English expression 'How are you?', it's only used on acquaintances.

Y: 你好吗? How are you? It's 你好 plus 吗. Like a question mark, 吗 is a sign of a question in Chinese.

Cam: In a reply to 你好吗?, we usually say 我很好. I'm very well.

Y: 我 is I, 很 means 'very', and 好 is 'good', remember? So word for word, 我很好 means 'I – very good.'

C: 你好吗, Yajie?

Y: 我很好. 谢谢! Thanks. 谢谢!

### Key words reminder

Hi, 你好, is the most popular greeting that can be used at any time, on any occasion and by anybody. 您好, also means hello. It's a more polite expression you can use when meeting someone older. 你好吗? is what you can use on somebody you have already known.

C: In fact there are in China some special ways to say hello, which may confuse we foreigners if we don't know the local culture.



Y: Yes. For instance, '你吃了吗' - 'have you eaten' . You'll hear this very very often in Beijing. But never be serious to answer 'Yes, I've eaten blah blah blah at my dinner.' Don't play fool.

C: In fact, '你吃了吗' – Have you eaten? - is simply a casual greeting like 你好. It's like we Canadians always talk about weather in our daily greetings. But this doesn't mean we're all meteorologists. Got it?

Cam: Well, that's it for today. One more important thing, you can win a gift by answering the question of the day: What's the difference between 你好 and 您好?

