Learn a Chinese Phrase

Supplementary Learner’s Guide
1-50

Confucius Institute
Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan
Contents

Introduction ......................................................................................................................................................... i.

吹牛皮 Blowing the Cow Hide ...................................................................................................................... 1

开夜车 Driving at Night .................................................................................................................................. 2

炒鱿鱼 Fried Squid ......................................................................................................................................... 3

大跌眼镜 Glasses Fell Off ............................................................................................................................... 4

说好话 说坏话 Good Talk/Bad Talk ............................................................................................................... 5

隔墙有耳 Walls Have Ears ............................................................................................................................. 6

心上人 Person on Top of Your Heart ................................................................................................................. 7

吃醋 Eat Vinegar ............................................................................................................................................ 8

花花公子 Flower Prince .................................................................................................................................. 9

人山人海 People Mountain People Sea ......................................................................................................... 10
对牛弹琴 Play Zither for a Cow.................................................................11
新手 New Hand.........................................................................................12
糊涂虫 Mixed-up Bug.............................................................................13
唱反调 Sing the Opposite Tune.................................................................14
白费口舌 Wasting Mouth and Tongue.......................................................15
萝卜白菜 Radish Cabbage......................................................................16
雷人 Thundering Someone....................................................................17
给力 Giving Strength...............................................................................18
电灯泡 Light Bulb..................................................................................19
坠入爱河 Fall into Love River................................................................20
Contents

暗恋 Dark Love ................................................................. 21
穿小鞋 Wearing Small Shoes .............................................. 22
耳旁风 Wind by the Ear ....................................................... 23
万人迷 10,000 Fans .......................................................... 24
落汤鸡 Fallen into Soup Chicken ........................................... 25
煲电话粥 Cooking Telephone Cereal .................................... 26
鸡蛋里挑骨头 Picking Bones Out of Eggs .......................... 27
碰钉子 Bumping into a Nail ............................................... 28
吃鸭蛋 Eating a Duck Egg ................................................ 29
丢三落四 Lose 3 Forget 4 .................................................. 30
Contents

卖萌 Selling Cuteness ........................................................................................................31

热门 Hot Door....................................................................................................................32

狼吞虎咽 Wolf Swallow Tiger Gulp ................................................................................33

花瓶 Flower Vase .............................................................................................................34

七上八下 7 Up 8 Down ..................................................................................................35

恶作剧 Wickedly Created Drama .....................................................................................36

坏到骨头里 Bad to the Bone ..........................................................................................37

剩女 Leftover Girl ..........................................................................................................38

闺蜜 Girl Honey ..............................................................................................................39

吊胃口 Hanging Someone’s Appetite ..............................................................................40
Contents

发烧友 Feverish Friend ......................................................................................41

分手 Separated Hands ......................................................................................42

校花&校草 School Grass & School Flower ...........................................................43

风云人物 Wind Cloud People ........................................................................44

八卦 Eight Symbols ...........................................................................................45

无聊 Without Sustenance .................................................................................46

云里雾里 Inside Cloud Inside Fog ...................................................................47

帮倒忙 Opposite Help .....................................................................................48

小气鬼 Little Air Ghost ....................................................................................49

霸道 Kingly Way ...............................................................................................50
The Learn a Chinese Phrase video series has been produced with the idea that if a phrase is fun or amusing, the learner will be more likely to remember it. Although many phrases we introduce may be memorable, as language instructors we realize that learners must ultimately utilize and regenerate the words and structures within these phrases if they are to become proficient in the language. In essence, we are drawing learners from the enticing (i.e. “sugar coated”) metaphorical phrase to the mechanics of learning individual words, their usage, and their potential expansion.

Verbs in one language seldom correspond perfectly with their alleged counterparts in another language. The verb “to know” in English, for example, is generally translated into Chinese as “zhī dào” when it means “to know a fact” or “to know a person by reputation”, but as “rèn shì” when it refers to “better knowing” or “meeting a person for the first time.” Because of these obvious linguistic differences and potential pitfalls, we have taken considerable pains to demonstrate as simply and as clearly as possible how targeted verbs should and should not be used.

Nouns, though less subject to change between languages (a rose is a rose is a rose!), generally offer a platform for vocabulary expansion in Chinese. Given the lack of cognates between Chinese and English, any chance to expand one’s vocabulary by easy association should be seized! Thus, when the noun “niú” is introduced as the Chinese word for “cow,” for example, we show the learner that several important compound words also include “niú”, such as “niú pái” (“steak” or literally “cow ribs”), “niú ròu” (“beef” or literally “cow meat”), “niú nǎi” (“milk” or literally “cow milk”), and “niú pí” (“leather” or literally “cow skin”).

Of course, we realize that learning a language is an arduous and often uncomfortable process. We are also aware that in the quest to acquire a primary language, children crave comfort and repetition. With these two concepts in mind, we have placed a special emphasis on creating a highly consistent, visually pleasing, and unintimidating layout that will be of special help to visual learners. Our goal, thus, is to teach simple and concise lessons where possible, rather than to be highly thorough or exhaustive. Additionally, we understand that like a children’s book, a language study guide should be inviting and reviewed on a frequent basis!

It may be important to briefly address the question “Why idioms?” In addition to the assertion that they are fun, interesting, and a window on culture, it is critical to note that the majority of any given language is metaphorical or non-literal. Beyond ordering food, asking for directions and simple negotiation, there is a never-ending world of culturally-based metaphors and idioms to be encountered in daily conversation. This highly important aspect of language cannot be ignored.

In sum, we hope that our Learn a Chinese Phrase videos, supplementary videos, and Supplementary Learner’s Guide will help provide Chinese language learners not only with phrases to pepper their conversations and amuse their Chinese-speaking friends, but with multiple platforms on which they can build their vocabulary and generate new sentences, which is so very critical in the language learning process!
Blowing the Cow Hide
“Exaggerating”

Example: 他在吹牛皮。

Tā zài chuīniúpí.

Tā zài chuī qìqíu.
He is blowing up a balloon.

Xiǎohái xǐhuān chuī pàopao.
Kids like to blow bubbles.

Tā chuī sàkesī.
He plays (blows) the saxophone.

Tā chuī húlusī.*
He plays (blows) the Hulusi.

niú
 牛 n. cow; ox; bull; bovine

niúpái  牛排 steak lit: cow rib

niúròu 牛肉 beef lit: cow meat

niúnǎi 牛奶 milk lit: cow milk

niúpí 牛皮 leather lit: cow leather

chuī v. to blow; to inflate

chuī v. to play (blow) a wind or brass instrument

 Cultural Note:

People of the Yellow River Bend would inflate cow or sheep hide to make a raft, which required a great deal of air. “Blowing the cow hide” has thus become the equivalent of the expression “to be full of hot air” or “windbag”. Additionally, blowing cow hide also refers to inflating an object to a size larger than originally intended, thus providing the equivalent of “exaggerating”.

húlusī
葫芦丝: a Chinese wind instrument
Driving at Night

“Burning the Midnight Oil” “Pulling an All-Nighter”

Wǒ zuówǎn kāiyèchē (le).

Example: 我昨晚开夜车（了）。

Driving at night implies that one is doing something urgent or additional at a time usually meant for rest. “Kāiyèchē” is usually used when cramming for an exam or finishing a work assignment after hours. “Pulling an all nighter” and “burning the midnight oil” are equivalents.

Cultural Note:
**Fried Squid**

“Getting Fired”

**Example:**  我被炒鱿鱼（了）。

Wǒ bèi chǎoyóuyú (le).

**Cultural Note:**

When a squid is fried, it curls up, reminiscent of how one would roll up his or her bedding and belongings when packing and leaving. Since a fired employee would have to pack belongings in such a way, being made into fried squid became associated with being fired from a job or other employment situation.
**Glasses Fell off**

“Taken Aback” / “Shocked”

Ràng rén dàdiē-yǎnjìng.

**Example:** 让人大跌眼镜。

Tā diēdǎo le.

He fell down.

Tā diēshāng le.

He fell down and injured himself.

### diē

跌 (+ comp.)

v. to tumble; to fall down

### diē jià

跌 (+ 价)

v. to fall in price

iphone 5 diējià le.

iphone 5 has fallen in price.

### yǎn

眼 n. eye

yi zhī/shuāng yǎnjīng

an eye / a pair of eyes

yǎnxiàn

eye liner

huà yǎnxiàn

put on eye liner

### yǎnjìng

眼镜 n. eyeglasses

fù

副

yǎnjīng

眼 线

eye liner

tài yáng yǎnjìng

taiyang yanjing

sunglasses

yǐnxíng yǎnjìng

contact lens

lit: invisible glasses

yǎnjīngjià

eyeglass frame

**Video Supplementary**
**Good Talk/Bad Talk**

"Talk up/Talk down"

**Examples:**

Tā shuō le hěn duō nǐ de hǎohuà.

他说了很多你好话。

Tā shuō le hěn duō nǐ de huàihuà.

他说了很多你坏话。

**shuō**

**v. to speak or to tell**

Tā zài shuōhuǎng.

她在说谎。

*She is telling a lie.*

Tā zài shuōxiào.

她在说笑。

*She is joking (talking and laughing).*

**Cultural Note:**

There are many ways to express “to tell” in Chinese. Here are a few to note:

To “tell”, in the sense of to “say” something to someone, use 说 说.

To “tell” (a story), use 讲 讲.

To “tell” (someone to do something), use 叫 / 让 陰.

To “tell”/“inform” (someone about something), 通知

**huà**

**n. spoken words or talk**

Mischa de huà hěn duō.

Mischa的话很多。

*Mischa’s words are many. / Mischa is very talkative.*

Tā de huà hěn shǎo.

他的话很少。

*His words are few. / He is a man of few words.*

Tā de huà hěn yǒuyìsi.

他的话很有意思。

*His talk is very interesting.*

**huà**

**n. dialect**

**Běijīnghuà**

北京话

*Beijing dialect*

**Guǎngdōnghuà**

广东话

*Cantonese dialect*

**jiāngxiānghuà**

家乡话

*regional dialect lit: hometown dialect*
隔墙有耳  
Walls Have Ears

“Walls Have Ears”

Example: 隔墙有耳

墙 n. wall  
耳/耳朵 n. ear

砖墙 brick wall  
耳钉 earring (stud)  lit: ear nail

城 wall  
耳环 earring (pendant)  lit: ear hoop

墙纸 wall paper  
耳垂 earlobe  lit: ear drooping

墙角 corner of the wall  
耳机 headset/headphone  lit: ear machine

耳罩 earmuff

Cultural Note:

China’s most famous wall, the Great Wall (ChángChéng, “长城”), actually means “long city” in Chinese.
**xīnshànggrén**  
**心上人**  
**Person on Top of Your Heart**  
**“Sweetheart”**

Tā yǒu xīnshànggrén.  
Example:  他有心上人。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>xīn</th>
<th>心  n. heart; mind; feeling; intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shàng</td>
<td>上  prep. on top of; in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| kāixīn | 开心  
happy   lit: open hearted |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nolan hěn kāixīn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Nolan 非常开心。  
**Nolan is very happy.** |

| shāngxīn | 伤心  
broken hearted   lit: hurting heart |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie hěn shāngxīn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Katie 非常伤心。  
**Katie is very broken hearted.** |

| zhōngxīn | 中心  
center |
|----------|--------|

| zhòngxīn | 重心  
center of gravity |
|----------|-------------------|

| héxīn | 核心  
core; nucleus |
|-------|-------------|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yīfu zài chuáng shàng.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 他衣服在床上。  
**The clothes are on the bed.** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shū zài zhuōzi shàng.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 这书在桌子上。  
**The books are on the table.** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zhōng zài qiáng shàng.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 这个钟在墙上。  
**The clock is on the wall.** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shù shàng yǒu liǎng zhī xiǎoniǎo.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 这棵树上有两只小鸟。  
**In/on the tree, there are two birds.** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tā jīngcháng qù yùndòng zhōngxīn.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 他经常去运动中心。  
**He often goes to the sports center.** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zhè liàng chē zhōngxīn hěn dī.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 这辆车重心很低。  
**This car's center of gravity is very low.** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Lennon shì Beatles yuèduì de héxīn rénwù.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>John Lennon is the core person of The Beatles.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**chīcù**

**Eat Vinegar**  
*"To Be Jealous"*

**Example:**  
Tā chīcù le.  
他吃醋了。

**chī**  
v. to eat + food or non-liquid medicine

- Tā chī mǐfàn.  
  他吃米饭。  
  *He eats rice.*

- Tā chī yào.  
  他吃药。  
  *He takes medicine*

**cù**  
n. vinegar  
mw: 杯; 瓶

- mǐcù  
  米醋  
  *rice vinegar*

- báicù  
  白醋  
  *white vinegar*

- píngguǒcù  
  苹果醋  
  *apple vinegar*

- cùtánzi  
  醋坛子  
  *an extremely jealous person*  
  *lit: vinegar jar*

**Cultural Note:**

There was allegedly a powerful prime minister in the Tang Dynasty who was said to be submissive to his wife. One day, the emperor sent him a beautiful girl to be his concubine, but the prime minister’s wife refused to accept the emperor’s decision. The wife said she would rather drink poison than accept her husband being with another woman. The emperor, touched by her courage and love, secretly filled a vial with vinegar and told her to drink it. After she gulped down the liquid and survived, the story spread and people began using the term, “吃醋” to refer to someone who was jealous of his/her lover.
Flower Prince
“Playboy”

Example: Jason is huāhuā-gōngzǐ.

Cultural Note:
gōngzǐ vs wángzǐ
公子 vs 王子
公子: Son of a feudal prince or high official in ancient China. Though seldom used in its literal form today, many Chinese politely refer to someone else’s son as “Nǐ/ tā jiā de gōngzǐ.”
王子: Today, “prince” (the son of a king) is generally translated as 王子.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Simplified</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rén shān rén hǎi</td>
<td>人山人海</td>
<td>人山人海</td>
<td>People Mountain People Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huǒchēzhàn rén shān rén hǎi.</td>
<td>火车站人山人海。</td>
<td>火车站人山人海</td>
<td>Example: 火车站人山人海。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### rén
- **n. people or person**

### réncái
- **人才**
  - **n. people or person**
  - **a talented person**
  - **He is a talented person.**

### biérén
- **别人**
  - **others / other people**
  - **He plays basketball with others.**

### rénlèi
- **人类**
  - **mankind; humanity**
  - **Science pushes humanity's progress.**

### hǎi
- **n. sea**

### hái jūn
- **海军**
  - **navy**
  - **lit: sea troops**
  - **a navy**

### hǎixiào
- **海啸**
  - **tsunami**
  - **lit: sea scream**
  - **a tsunami**

### hǎiyáng
- **海洋**
  - **ocean**
  - **an ocean**

### shān
- **n. mountain**
  - **mw: 座**

### xuěshān
- **雪山**
  - **snow covered mountain**
  - **lit: snow mountain**

### huǒshān
- **火山**
  - **volcano**
  - **lit: fire mountain**

### shānmài
- **山脉**
  - **mountain range**
  - **lit: mountain arteries/veins**
**Learn a Chinese Phrase**

**对牛弹琴**

**Play Zither for a Cow**

“Casting Pearls before Swine”

Tā zài dìu niú tán qín.

**Example:** 他在对牛弹琴。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>qín</th>
<th>n. general name for a musical instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tán</td>
<td>v. to play a stringed instrument that requires plucking or pounding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gāngqín</td>
<td>yì jià/tái gāngqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piano</td>
<td>a piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shùqín</td>
<td>yī bā shùqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harp</td>
<td>a harp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lā</td>
<td>v. to play an instrument using a bow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dàtiqín</td>
<td>yī bā dàtiqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cello</td>
<td>a cello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhōngtiqín</td>
<td>yī bā zhōngtiqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viola</td>
<td>a viola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiǎoqín</td>
<td>yī bā xiǎoqín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violin</td>
<td>a violin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cultural Note:**

Additional verbs in Chinese for playing a musical instrument include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dóu</th>
<th>Tā zài dōu.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dǎ</td>
<td>to play a percussion instrument by pounding or striking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā zài dǎgǔ.</td>
<td>He is playing the drums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chuī</td>
<td>Tā zài chuī.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>吹</td>
<td>to play a brass or woodwind instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā zài chuī dízi.</td>
<td>He is playing the flutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā huì chuī Sàkesī.</td>
<td>He can play saxophone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**xīnshǒu  新手**  
*New Hand*  
*“Green Horn” “Newbie”*

**Example:**  
Wǒ shì kāi chē xīnshǒu.  
*我是开车新手。*

**xīn**  
新  adj. new

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>xīn yīfu</th>
<th>new clothes</th>
<th>yī běn xīn shū</th>
<th>a new book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xīn wánjù</td>
<td>new toy</td>
<td>yī gè xīn wánjù</td>
<td>a new toy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xīn gē</td>
<td>new song</td>
<td>yī shǒu xīn gē</td>
<td>a new song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**xīn**  
新  adv. newly/recently  
(新 + v. + 的 + n.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>xīn lái de xuésheng</th>
<th>newly-arrived student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xīn mǎi de chē</td>
<td>newly-bought car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xīn xiě de shū</td>
<td>newly-written book(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**shǒu**  
手  n. a person associated with a job or profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gēshǒu</th>
<th>singer</th>
<th>lit: song hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gūshǒu</td>
<td>drummer</td>
<td>lit: drum hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhūshǒu</td>
<td>assistant</td>
<td>lit: assist hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bāngshǒu</td>
<td>helper</td>
<td>lit: help hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuīshǒu</td>
<td>sailor</td>
<td>lit: water hand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
糊涂虫

糊涂虫

糊涂虫

他是个糊涂虫。

Example: 他是个糊涂虫。

糊涂

adj. muddled or confused

糊涂账

chaotic financial records  lit: muddled records

Zhè shì yī bǐ糊涂账。

这是一笔糊涂账。

This is a muddled account.

装糊涂

pretend to be confused (play dumb)

Tā zài zhuāng糊涂。

他在装糊涂。

He is playing dumb.

Wǒ yǒu diǎnr糊涂。

我有点儿糊涂。

I'm a little bit confused.

虫

n. insect or worm

只

mw: 只

昆虫

insect

害虫

pests

蝗虫

locust

瓢虫

ladybug

毛毛虫

caterpillar

萤火虫

fire fly
Sing the Opposite Tune
“Naysayer”/“Contrarian”

Example: 你跟我唱反调。

chàng fǎndiào
chàng fǎndiào  v. to sing

fǎn  adj. in the opposite direction; reverse; inside out

dí yī shēngdiào  first tone

qǔdiào  tune; melody

zǒudiào  out of tune; off key

shēngdiào  rising tone

lǎodiào  old tune

gāo/low/diào  high key/low key/the key of C

jiàngdiào  falling tone

Yìngbì de fānmiàn yǒu yī duǒ huā.
The coin’s reverse side has a flower.

Tā bǎ wàzi chuān fǎn le.
He wears his socks inside out.

Túshūguǎn zài yīyuàn de fǎn fāngxiàng.
The Library is in the opposite direction of the hospital.
Wasting Mouth and Tongue
“Wasting Your Breath”

Nǐ báifèi kǒušé.

Example: 你白费口舌。

fèi  费  v. to cost/take (time or effort)

Zhè jiàn shì hěn fèi shíjiān.
This thing is very expensive.

Dǎsào fángjiān hěn fèili.
Cleaning the house takes a lot of effort.

báifèi  白费  v. to waste

báifèi jīngli
白费精力

to waste mental or physical effort

báifèi gōngfu
白费功夫

to waste physical effort
lit: to waste work

báifèi shíjiān
白费时间

to waste time

báifèi liqi
白费力气

to waste strength

fèi  （交/付+）费 n. fee

xuéfèi
学费

lit: study fee

shuǐdiànfèi
水 电 费

lit: water and electricity fee

yóufèi
邮费

lit: postage fee

kǒu  口 n. mouth

kǒuxiāngtáng
口香糖

chewing gum
lit: mouth fragrant candy

Tā zài jiáo kǒuxiāngtáng.
He is chewing gum.

kǒuyǔ
口语

spoken language
lit: mouth language

Tā zài liànxí zhōngwén kǒuyǔ.
He is practicing spoken Chinese.
Radish Cabbage

“To Each Their Own”

Luóbo báicài, gè yǒu suǒ ài.

Example: 萝 卜 白 菜, 各 有 所 爱。

cài
菜 n. vegetable; dish

zhòng cài
种 菜
to grow vegetables

Tā zài yuànzi lǐ zhòng cài.

He plants vegetables in the yard.

diǎn cài
点 菜
to order food (at a restaurant)

Tā zài fàndiàn diǎn cài.

He is ordering food at a restaurant.

ài
爱 n. love; affection

zhēn’ài
真 爱
true love

mǔài    fùài
母 爱 / 父 爱
maternal love / paternal love

yǒuài
友 爱
friendly love

ài
爱 v. be fond of; to love

Tā hěn ài guó.

He is very patriotic.

Wǒ ài tīng yīnyuè.

I’m fond of listening to music.

Wǒ ài wǒ de mǔqīn.

I love my mom.
Nǐ de yīfu hěn léirén.

**Example:** 你的衣服很雷人。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>léi</th>
<th>léi</th>
<th>kē</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>雷 n. thunder</td>
<td>雷 n. mine</td>
<td>颗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- léiyǔ 雷雨 thunderstorm
- léidiàn 雷电 thunder and lightning
- léishēng 雷声 thunderclap
- diléi 地雷 land mine
- yūléi 鱼雷 torpedo lit: fish mine
- shǒuléi 手雷 grenade lit: hand mine

**Caution:**
“雷” is only used as a verb with the noun “人”.

- hěn léirén 很雷人 very shocking
- tèbié léirén 特别雷人 extremely shocking

**Cultural Note:**
Wàimian diàn shǎn léi míng. 外面电闪雷鸣。
Outside it’s lightning and thundering.

lit: Outside electricity strikes and thunder sounds.
Giving Strength
“Encouraging/ Flattering”

Example: 你的老师很给力。

Nǐ de lǎoshī hěn gěilì.

**Example:**

- Nǐ de lǎoshī hěn gěilì. 你的老师很给力。
- Qǐng gěi wǒ yàoshi. 请给我钥匙。
- Bié gěi tā zhàopiàn. 别给他照片。
- Qǐng bǎ shū gěi wǒ. 请把书给我。
- Bié bǎ pánzi gěi tā. 别把盘子给他。

**Cultural Note:**

给力 is a term that gained popularity on the internet in China. The original meaning was to give someone strength, but it soon came to be used as “encouraging”.

**Usage:**

- 给 v. to give (给+ sb. + sth.)
- 给 v. to give (把+sth. 给+sb.)

**Example:**

- Qǐng gěi wǒ yàoshi. 请给我钥匙。
- Bié gěi tā zhàopiàn. 别给他照片。
- Qǐng bǎ shū gěi wǒ. 请把书给我。
- Bié bǎ pánzi gěi tā. 别把盘子给他。

**Words:**

- 力 n. power; strength; ability
- 听力 hearing or listening ability
- 握力 grip strength
- 记忆力 ability to remember/memorize
diàndēngpào 电灯泡  
**Light Bulb**

“Third Wheel”

Example: 他是个电灯泡。

Tā shì gè diàndēngpào.

### diàn
电  n. electricity

diànchí 电 池  battery
diànnǎo 电 脑  computer
diàndòng yáshuā 电 动 牙 刷  electric toothbrush

### dēng
灯  n. lamp; light; lantern

zhǎn gè 盎; 个

### pào
泡  n. bubble; blister; something shaped like bubbles

mw: 个

qìpào 气 泡  air bubbles  
(i.e. carbonated beverage)
quī pào yú 气 泡 鱼  puffer fish
shuǐpào 水 泡  bubbles/blister

lit: water bubbles
féizào pào 肥 皂 泡  soap bubbles

Tā jiǎo shàng qǐ pào le.

He has blisters on his feet.

### lùdēng
路灯  street light

táidēng 台 灯  table/desk lamp
dēngtǎ 灯 塔  lighthouse

### hónglǜdēng
红绿灯  traffic lights

### pào
泡  v. to soak; to steep

### páocài
泡菜  kimchi

Chènyī pào zài shuǐ lǐ.
衬衣泡在水里。
The shirts are soaking (in the water).

Shuǐjiào qián páozǎo
睡觉前泡澡。
Before sleeping, take a bath.

Wǒ gěi kèrén páochá.
我给客人泡茶。
I make/steep/brew tea for the guests.
**Learn a Chinese Phrase**

**zhui rù àihé**

**Fall into Love River**

"Fall in Love"

**Example:** 你坠入爱河了。

Example: Nǐ zhui rù àihé le.

zhui

坠 v. to fall; to drop; to tumble

Fēijī zhui rù dàhǎi.
飞机坠入大海。
The plane fell into the ocean.

Shù shàng de guǒzi yáoyáo yùzhui.
树上的果子摇摇欲坠。

**hé**

河 n. river

**tiáo**

条

**rù**

v. enter; join; become a member

rùkǒu

入口 entrance

rùjìng

入境 enter a country

rùkǒu

入门 cross the threshold (learn the rudiment of a subject)

rùxué

入学 start school

**Huáng Hé**

黄河 the Yellow River *

hé'àn

河岸 river bank

héliú

河流 river

yùnhé

运河 canal

lit: transporting river

**diàozhuì**

吊坠 pendant of a jewelry

qiānzhui

铅坠 plumb bob

ěr zhui

耳坠 dangling earring

**Huang He**

* 黄河: The Yellow River is the second-longest river in Asia after the Yangtze River, and the sixth-longest in the world with an estimated length of 5,464 km.
**Learn a Chinese Phrase**

**ànliàn 暗恋**  
"To Have a Secret Crush"

Example: 他暗恋那个女孩儿。

Tā ànliàn nàge nǚhái.

**àn 暗**  
adj. dark; dim

Tā chuānzhe yì tiáo àn hóng de qúnzi.  
She is wearing a dark red dress.

Zhè ge fángjiān de dēng tài àn le.  
This room’s light is too dark.

**liàn 恋**  
v. to love; to long for

Tāmen liànài le.  
They are in love.

Tā hěn liànjiù.  
He is sentimental/nostalgic.

Tā shì gè liànjiā de rén.  
He is a family (focused) person.

**Cultural Note:**

In mainland China: 爱人 (ài rén) generally refers to one’s spouse;  
恋人 (liàn rén) generally refers to a boyfriend or a girlfriend.
Wearing Small Shoes

"To be In the Dog House"

Wǒ de tàitai gěi wǒ chuān xiǎoxié.

Example: 我的太太给我穿小鞋。

chuān
穿
v. to put on/ wear clothes

chuān guò
穿 + 过
v. to pass through

Tā zài chuān yīfu.
他在穿衣。
He is putting on his clothes.

Tā chuānzhe yì tiáo jiù niúzǎikù.
她穿着一条旧牛仔裤。
She is wearing an old pair of jeans.

Tā chuānguò mǎlù qù gōngyuán.
他穿过马路去公园。
He crossed the road to the park.

Tā chuān guò rénqún.
她穿过人群。
She passed through the crowd.

xié
鞋
n. shoe; footwear

zhī shuāng
mw. 只、双

píxié
皮鞋
leather shoes

liángxié
凉鞋
sandal

tuōxié
拖鞋
slipper

dòngdongxié
d洞洞鞋
Crocs

gāogēnxié
高跟鞋
high heels

yùndòng xié
运动鞋
sport shoes
Wind by the Ear

"In One Ear and Out the Other"

Wǒ bǎ tàitai de huà dāng ěr páng fēng.

Example: 我把太太的话当耳旁风。

páng 旁  n. side

lù páng 路 旁  road side

Tā zhàn zài lù páng. 他站在路旁。

Tā cóng pángmén zǒu jin lái. 他从旁门走进来。

páng tīng 旁听  attend/audit as a visitor

Wǒ páng tīng tā de kè. 我旁听他的课。

páng guān 旁观  stand by

Alice hé Nolan zài dǎ jià, Melinda zài páng guān. Alice和Nolan在打架，Melinda在旁观。

fēng 风  n. wind

wēi fēng 微风  breeze

dà fēng 大风  gale

lóng juǎn fēng 龙卷风  tornado

lit: dragon curl wind

tái fēng 台风  typhoon

yí zhèn/yì gǔ wēi fēng 一阵 / 一股微风  a breeze

yí zhèn/yì gǔ dà fēng 一阵 / 一股大风  a gale

yí zhèn/yì gǔ lóng juǎn fēng 一阵 / 一股龙卷风  a tornado

yí zhèn/yì chǎng tái fēng 一阵 / 一场台风  a typhoon
Learn a Chinese Phrase

wàn rén mí
万人迷
“Extremely Popular Person”

Example: Nolan shì gè wàn rén mí.

Nolan 是 个 万 人 迷。

wàn
万
num. ten thousand

liǎng wàn yuan
两 万 元
20,000 yuan

Fángzū shì liǎng wàn yuán.
房租 是 两 万 元。
The rent is 20,000 RMB.

liǎng wàn jiǔ qiān rén
两 万 九 千 人
29,000 people

Wěi'ěn zhōuli dàxué yǒu 29,000 míng xuēshēng.
伟 恩 州 立 大 学 有 29,000 名 学 生。
Wayne State University has 29,000 students.

liù shí qī wàn wǔ qiān rén
六 十 七 万 五 千 人
675,000 people

Dǐtèlǜ yǒu 675,000 rén.
底 特 律 有 675,000 人。
Detroit has 675,000 people.

mí
n. fan; aficionado

bàngqiú mí
棒 球 迷
baseball fan

jīngjù mí
京剧迷
Beijing opera fan

gānlānqiú mí
橄榄球迷 (American) football fan

gōngfu diānyǐng mí
功夫电影迷
Kung fu movie fan

mírén
adj. attracting; charm-

mírén
迷人
attractive; charming lit: charms people

jǐngsè mírén
景色迷人
The scenery charms people./
The scenery is charming.

Tā de wēixiào hěn mírén.
她的微笑很迷人。
Her smile is very charming.
Fallen into Soup Chicken
“A Drowned Rat”

Example: 你像一个落汤鸡。

luò 落 v. to fall; to drop

Huā kāi huā luò.
Flowers bloom and fall.

Tā de tóufa kāishǐ tuōluò.
他的头发开始脱落。
His hair began to fall out.

Xuěhuā luò zài dì shàng le.
雪花落在地上了。
Snow fell on the ground.

luò 落 v. to go down; to descend

Fēijī ānquán jiàngluò le.
飞机安全降落了。
The airplane landed safely.

Cháo zhǎng cháo luò.
潮涨潮落。
The tide rises and falls.

Tàiyáng luòshān le.
太阳落山了。
The sun set behind the mountain.

tāng 汤 n. soup mw: 碗

mǐtāng 米汤 rice broth
ròutāng 肉汤 meat soup
dòufu tāng 豆腐汤 tofu soup
jídàn tāng 鸡蛋汤 egg drop soup

Cultural Note:
“汤 (tāng)” vs. “羹 (gēng)”

“汤” refers to a thin, broth-based soup; “羹” refers to a thicker soup, generally containing starch.
**bāo diàn huà zhōu**  
**煲电话粥**  
**Cooking Telephone Cereal**  
**To Have a Long Telephone Conversation**

Sofiá zài bāo diànhuà zhōu.  
*Example: Sofiá 在煲电话粥。*

**bāo**  
煲  
v. to cook over long period of time (simmer)

**zhōu**  
粥  
n. porridge; gruel; congee  
mw: 碗

**Wǒ xiǎng xué bāotāng.**  
我想学煲汤。  
*I want to learn how to cook soup.*

**Tā hěn huì bāo yúpiàn zhōu.**  
他很会煲鱼片粥。  
*He is good at cooking fish congee.*

**Cultural Note:**  
The Chinese dish commonly known as hotpot is translated "huoguo" or literally fire pot. Bao usually refers to an earthen container, in which food is prepared and also frequently served. The closest English equivalent to “bao” would be “casserole.”

**báizhōu**  
白粥  
*plain gruel*

**shūcài zhōu**  
蔬菜粥  
*vegetable congee*

**hǎixiān zhōu**  
海鲜粥  
*seafood congee*

**diànfǎnbāo**  
电饭煲  
*rice cooker*  
*lit: electric rice pot*

**qiézi bāo**  
茄子煲  
*eggplant casserole*

**dòufǔ bāo**  
豆腐煲  
*tofu casserole*
Picking Bones Out of Eggs

“Nitpick”

Example: 你在鸡蛋里挑骨头。

Nǐ zài jīdàn lǐ tiāo gǔtou.

Example:

Tā tiāo chū làn píngguǒ.
He picks out the rotten apples.

Tā tiāo chū yúcì.
He picks out the fish bones.

Wǒ xiǎng tiāo yì zhāng zuì hǎo de huà.
I want to select the best painting.

tiāo
挑  v. to pick out (sth. undesirable)

tiāo
挑  v. to choose; to select; to pick (sth. desirable)

gǔ
骨  n. bone

gǔjié
骨节  joint

gǔjià
骨架  framework

gǔgé
骨骼  skeleton

gǔzhé
骨折  fracture
**pèng dīngzi**  
Bumping into a Nail  
“Getting Rejected” “Getting Shot Down”

*Example:*  
Wǒ pèng dīngzi le.  
我碰钉子了。

**pèng**  
v. physically touch or bump

- Tā bǎ shuǐpíng pèng fān le.  
  他把水瓶碰翻了。   
  *He knocked the bottle over.*

- Wǒ de tóu pèng dào mén shàng le.  
  我的头碰到门上了。   
  *I bumped my head on the door.*

**dīng**  
n. nail; peg; tack  
**méi**  
枚

- tú dīng  
  图钉  
  pushpin/thumbtack

- dàtóu dīng  
  大头钉  
  common nail  
  lit: large-headed nail

- dìngshū dīng  
  订书钉  
  staple

- luósī dīng  
  螺丝钉  
  screw  
  lit: screw nail

**pèng**  
v. meet; encounter; “run in-

- Wǒ zài jiē shàng pèng dào yī gè péngyǒu.  
  我在街上碰到一个朋友。   
  *I ran into a friend on the street.*

- Tā pèng dào máfan le.  
  他碰到麻烦了。   
  *He ran into trouble.*

**dīng**  
v. nail; pin; follow

- Tā zài dìng dīngzi.  
  他在钉钉子。   
  *He is pounding a nail.*

- Tā bǎ tóu dīng zài qiáng shàng.  
  他把地图钉在墙上。   
  *He pins the map on the wall.*

- Tā bǎ tōngzhī dìng zài bùgàolán shàng.  
  她把通知钉在布告栏上。   
  *She tacked the notice on the bulletin board.*
Eating a Duck Egg

“Getting a Goose Egg” “Getting a Zero” “Getting Shut Out”

**Example:**

Wǒ kǎoshì chī le yādàn.

我考试吃了鸭蛋。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>鸭 (n. duck)</th>
<th>蛋 (n. egg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yā</td>
<td>dàn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 公鸭 (gōngyā/ drake) | 蛋 (dàn) |
| 母鸭 (mǔyā/ duck)     |          |
| 烤鸭 (kǎoyā/ roasted duck) |          |
| 野鸭 (yěyā/ wild duck)  |          |
| 小鸭 (xiǎoyā/ duckling) |          |
| 鸭肉 (yāròu/ duck meat) |          |
| 鸭汤 (yātāng/ duck soup) |          |
| 鸭掌 (yāzhǎng/ duck feet) |          |
| 鸭舌帽 (yāshémào/ cap)   |          |
| 鸭嘴兽 (yāzuǐshòu/ platypus) |          |

| 鸡蛋 (jídàn/ chicken egg) | 公鸭 (gōngyā) |
| 鹅蛋 (édàn/ goose egg)    | 母鸭 (mǔyā)  |
| 鸭蛋 (niǎodàn/ bird egg)  | 烤鸭 (kǎoyā) |
| 野鸭蛋 (yěyā/ wild duck)  | 烤鸭 (kǎoyā) |
| 小鸭蛋 (xiǎoyā/ duckling) | 烤鸭 (kǎoyā) |
| 鸭蛋肉 (yāròu/ duck meat) | 鸭蛋 (dàn) |
| 鸭蛋汤 (yātāng/ duck soup) | 鸭蛋 (dàn) |
| 鸭蛋掌 (yāzhǎng/ duck feet) | 鸭蛋 (dàn) |
| 鸭蛋舌 (yāshémào/ cap) | 鸭蛋 (dàn) |
| 鸭蛋嘴 (yāzuǐshòu/ platypus) | 鸭蛋 (dàn) |

| 蛋黄 (dàn'gāo/ egg yolk) | 鸡蛋 (jídàn) |
| 蛋白 / 蛋清 (dàn'gāo/ egg white) | 鸡蛋 (jídàn) |
| 蛋壳 (dàn'gāo/ egg shells) | 鸡蛋 (jídàn) |
| 煎蛋 (jiāndàn/ scrambled eggs) | 鸡蛋 (jídàn) |
| 水煮蛋 (shuǐzhǔdàn/ boiled eggs) | 鸡蛋 (jídàn) |
| 蛋汤 (dàntāng/ egg soup) | 鸡蛋 (jídàn) |
diū sān là sì

Lose 3 Forget 4

“Forgetful”

Nǐ zǒngshì diū sān là sì.

Example: 你总是丢三落四。

diū 丢  v. lose something concrete

Wǒ de yàoshi diū le.
我的钥匙丢了。
I lose my key.

Wǒ de yǎnjìng diū le.
我的眼镜丢了。
I lose my eye glasses.

Wǒ de qiánbāo diū le.
我的钱包丢了。
I lose my wallet.

diū 丢  v. throw; cast; toss

Tā bǎ zhǐ diū jìn fèizī lǒu.
他把纸丢进废纸篓。
He throws the paper away into the wastebasket.

Tā bǎ wǒ de huà diū zài nǎo hòu.
她把我的话丢在脑后。
She completely ignores my words.

là 落  v. forget; leave an object behind

bǎ + O + là + zài + place

Wǒ bǎ zuòyè là zài jiā lǐ le.
我把作业落在家里了。
I left my homework at home.

Wǒ bǎ hùzhào là zài xuéxiào le.
我把护照落在学校了。
I left my passport at school.

Wǒ bǎ shǒujī là zài bàngōngshì le.
我把手机落在办公室了。
I left my cellphone at the office.

là 落  v. fall/lag behind

Tā là zài wǒmen de hòumiàn.
她落在我们的后面。
She lags behind us.

Tā là yī gè xīngqī de kè.
他落了一个星期的课。
He is a whole week behind with his lessons.
卖萌  
卖萌

Nǐ zài màiméng.  
你在卖萌。

Example:  

Nà gè xiǎonǚháir hěn méng.  
那个小女孩很萌。

Tā de māo hěn méng.  
他的猫很萌。

Hello Kitty hěn méng.  
Hello Kitty很萌。

卖萌 n. cute

Cultural Note:

“萌 (méng)” is from the Japanese “萌え”.
Its original meaning was “to bud,” but it gradually came to be associated with things that were “cute,” especially among young women and OTAKU (“nerds”) in Japanese anime. As a result, “萌 (méng)” is used in Chinese as an adjective meaning someone or something is “especially cute”.  

Nà gè xiǎonǚháir hěn méng.  
那个小女孩很萌。

Tā de māo hěn méng.  
他的猫很萌。

Hello Kitty hěn méng.  
Hello Kitty很萌。

Hello Kitty is very cute.

卖萌 n. cute

Cultural Note:

“萌 (méng)” is from the Japanese “萌え”.
Its original meaning was “to bud,” but it gradually came to be associated with things that were “cute,” especially among young women and OTAKU (“nerds”) in Japanese anime. As a result, “萌 (méng)” is used in Chinese as an adjective meaning someone or something is “especially cute”.

Cultural Note:
**Learn a Chinese Phrase**

**rémén 热门**

**Hot Door**

“Popular”

**Example:** 金融很热门。

Jīnróng hěn rèmén.

今天天气很热。

*It’s very hot today.*

- **rè 热**  adj. (temperature)
  - rèyóu 热狗
  - rèshuǐ 热水
  - rètāng 热汤
  - Jīntiān hěn rè. 今天天气很热。
- **rè 热**  adj. warm-hearted; affectionate; kind
  - rèqíng 热情
  - rènào 热闹
  - rèxīn 热心

**mén 门**  n. door; gate

- ménkǒu 门口
- ménwèi 门卫
- ménlíng 门铃
- ményá 门牙
- zhèngmén 正门
- qiánmén 前门
- hòumén 后门
- xiàomén 校门
- entrance; doorway
- doorman/entrance guard
- doorbell
- main entrance
- front door
- back door
- school gate

**Video**

- Video
- rèqíng 热情
  - lit: warm feeling
  - enthusiasm; enthusiastic
- rènào 热闹
  - lively/bustling
  - lit: warm and noisy
- rèxīn 热心
  - warm-hearted
**Wolf Swallow Tiger Gulp**

**Wǒ lángtūn hǔyàn de chīfàn.**

*Example:* 我狼吞虎咽地吃饭。

**tūn**

吞  v. swallow; seize; take over

- Tā tūnxià yí gè jiǎozi.
  他吞下一个饺子。
  *He swallowed down a dumpling.*

- Nà ge gōngsī tūnbìng le jǐ gè xiǎo gōngsī.
  那个公司吞并了几个小公司。
  *That company took over several small companies.*

- Hǎilàng tūnmò le nà tiáo xiǎochuán.
  海浪吞没了那条小船。
  *The waves swallowed up the tiny craft.*

**yàn**

咽  v. swallow; devour

- Tā zuò de cài nán yǐ xià yàn.
  他做的菜难以下咽。
  *His cooking is hard to swallow.*

- Tā yóuyǒng de shìhòu yàn le yì kuǒ shuǐ.
  她游泳的时候咽了一口水。
  *While swimming she swallowed a mouthful of water.*

- Wǒ de huà dào zuǐ biān yòu yànxià.
  我的话到嘴边又咽下。
  *My words came to the mouth but I swallow them down again.*
Flower Vase
“Pretty But Empty”

huāpíng 花瓶

Example: Jessica shì ge huāpíng.

Jessica 是个花瓶。

ping 瓶 n. bottle; jar; cruet / vase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pinggài</th>
<th>cap; jar lid</th>
<th>lit: bottle cap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jiǔpíng wine bottle</td>
<td>jīnggài</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huāpíng vase</td>
<td>píngsāi</td>
<td>cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sùliào píng plastic bottle</td>
<td>pingjǐn</td>
<td>bottle neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bōli píng glass bottle</td>
<td>kāipíngqì</td>
<td>corkscrew; bottle opener</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ping measure word

| yi píng kělè a bottle of cola |
| wǔ píng hóngjiǔ five bottles of wine |
| liǎng píng suānnǎi two jars/bottles of yogurt |
| sān píng guǒjiàng three jars of jam |
Wǒ xīn lǐ qī shàng bā xià de.

**Example:** 我心里七上八下的。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>shàng</th>
<th>上</th>
<th>n. directional noun</th>
<th>shàng miàn</th>
<th>上 面</th>
<th>above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàng pù</td>
<td>shàng pù</td>
<td>上铺</td>
<td>upper bunk on a train or ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàng bàn shēn</td>
<td>shàng bàn shēn</td>
<td>上半身</td>
<td>the upper body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>shàng</th>
<th>上</th>
<th>adj. first (part); preceding; previous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàng cì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàng zhōu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàng bàn nián</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>shàng</th>
<th>上</th>
<th>v. begin work or study at a fixed time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàngkè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàngxué</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shàngbān</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>xià</th>
<th>下</th>
<th>n. directional noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lóu xià</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shù xià</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xià zuīchún</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>xià</th>
<th>下</th>
<th>adj. next; latter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xià ge yuè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xià xīngqī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xià xuéqī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>xià</th>
<th>下</th>
<th>v. finish; leave off; get off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xiàkè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xià chē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xiàbān</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**èzuójù  恶作剧  Wickedly Created Drama  “Playing a Prank”**

**Example:** Alice 搞 恶 作 剧。

| è  恶  | adj. evil; wicked; bad |
| jù  剧  | n. drama |

| è'rén  恶人  | evil or vicious person |
| èmó  恶魔  | evil spirit |
| èguǒ  恶果  | consequence  lit: evil fruit |
| èxí  恶习  | bad habit |

| xǐjù  喜剧  | comedy  lit: happy drama |
| bēijù  悲剧  | tragedy  lit: sad drama |
| jùběn  剧本  | script  lit: drama script |
| júyuàn  剧院  | theater  lit: drama house |

**zuò  作  v. do; make**

- zuò diàochá  作调查  to do an investigation
- zuò bàogào  作报告  to do (give) a presentation
- zuò dǎsuàn  作打算  to make a plan
- zuò gōngkè  作（做）功课  to do one’s homework

**gāo  搞 v. + adj.  to do; to make**

- gāo gānjìng  搞干净  to make clean
- gāo zāng  搞脏  to make dirty
- gāo xiào  搞笑  provoke laughter
- gāo luàn  搞乱  to make a mess
Bad to the Bone

坏到骨头里

Nǐ huài dào gǔtou lǐ le.

Example: 你坏到骨头里了。

huái
坏  adj. bad; evil; wicked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>huàirén</th>
<th>bad or wicked person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jǐ gè huàirén</td>
<td>several bad people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>huàidàn</th>
<th>bad person  lit: bad egg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jǐ gè huàidàn</td>
<td>several bad people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>huàishi</th>
<th>bad thing/evil deed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jǐ jiàn huàishi</td>
<td>several bad things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>huàihuà</th>
<th>malicious remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jǐ jù huàihuà</td>
<td>a few malicious remarks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Niúnǎi huái le.
牛奶坏了。 The milk went bad.

Zìxíngchē huái le.
自行车坏了。 The bike broke down.

Wánjù shuāi huái le.
玩具摔坏了。 The toy dropped and broke.

gǔ
骨  n. bones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gūròu</th>
<th>flesh and blood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>páigū</td>
<td>spareribs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gūgǎn</th>
<th>boney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**shèngnǚ**  
**Leftover Girl**  
“Single Woman”

**Example:**  
我是个剩女。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>shèng</strong></th>
<th><strong>shèng</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>剩</td>
<td>adj. surplus; leftover; remnant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>剩</td>
<td>v. be left over; remain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Leftover Male</strong></th>
<th><strong>Leftover Food</strong></th>
<th><strong>Leftover Staff</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shèngnán</td>
<td>shèngcài</td>
<td>shènghuò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>剩男</td>
<td>剩 菜</td>
<td>剩 货</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leftover man</td>
<td>leftover food</td>
<td>leftover staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>shèngyú</strong></th>
<th><strong>shèngyú</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>剩余</td>
<td>adj. surplus; remaining + 的 + noun.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>shèngyú de shíjiān</strong></th>
<th><strong>shèngyú de qián</strong></th>
<th><strong>shèngyú de liángshì</strong></th>
<th><strong>shèngyú de chǎnpǐn</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>剩余的时间</td>
<td>剩余的钱</td>
<td>剩余的粮食</td>
<td>剩余的产品</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remaining time</td>
<td>remaining money</td>
<td>surplus grain</td>
<td>surplus inventory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cultural Note:**

剩女（shèngnǚ）is a pejorative term made popular by the All-China Women’s Federation that classifies unmarried women in their late twenties and beyond. The term is most prominent in China, including a state sponsored directive and program, but has been used to describe women across Asia, India, and North America.
**Girl Honey/Iron Brother**

“Best Friend Forever” / “Best Buddy”

**Teresa shì wǒ de guīmì.**

**Example:** Teresa 是我的 闺蜜。

**Nín de múqīn de guīmíng shì shénme?**

您的母亲的闺名是什么？

**What’s your mother’s maiden name?**

**Tā guìnǚ hěn piàoliàng.**

他闺女很漂亮。

**His daughter (northern China) is very beautiful.**

**guī** 闺 n. girl’s chamber

**mì** 蜜 n. honey

**fēngmì** 蜂蜜 honey

**mìfēng** 蜜蜂 bee

**miyuè** 蜜月 honeymoon

**mìjiǔ** 蜜酒 mead; mulse

**shuǐmìtáo** 水蜜桃 juicy and honey peach

**tiányán mìyǔ** 甜言蜜语 sweet words

lit: sweet words

honey talk

**tiě** 铁 n. iron

**tiēguō** 铁锅 iron wok

**cítiě** 磁铁 magnet

**tiěsī** 铁丝 iron wire

**tiělù** 铁路 railway

**tiěkuàng** 铁矿 iron mine
diàowèikǒu
吊胃口

**Hanging Someone’s Appetite**
“Leave Someone Hanging”

Example: 别吊我的胃口。

**diào**
吊 v. to hang     adj. hanging

- diàochē
  吊车
  crane     lit: hanging vehicle

- diàodēng
  吊灯
  chandelier     lit: hanging light

- diàodài
  吊带
  spaghetti straps     lit: hanging straps

- diàociáo
  吊桥
  suspension bridge     lit: hanging bridge

- diàoqiáo
  吊桥
  suspension bridge

- diàochuáng
  吊床
  hammock     lit: hanging bed

- diàoqiáo
  吊桥
  suspension bridge

**wèikǒu**
胃口 n. appetite

- wèikǒu hǎo
  胃口好
good appetite

- méiyǒu wèikǒu
  没有胃口
to have no appetite

- dǎo wèikǒu
  倒胃口
to spoil or ruin one’s appetite

- dui wèikǒu
  对胃口
to suit one’s taste     lit: to suit one’s appetite

- diàochē
  吊车
  crane

- wèikǒu hǎo
  胃口好
good appetite

- méiyǒu wèikǒu
  没有胃口
to have no appetite
**Feverish Friend**

*“Enthusiastic fan”*

Melinda is Hello Kitty发烧友。

**Example:** Melinda是Hello Kitty发烧友。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>发 (fā)</th>
<th>v. to feel a certain physical sensation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>发热 (fā rè)</td>
<td>have a fever or to feel warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>发冷 (fā lěng)</td>
<td>to feel cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>发麻 (fā má)</td>
<td>to feel numb; tingle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>发痒 (fā yǎng)</td>
<td>to feel itchy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>发 (fā)</th>
<th>v. to send out; deliver; distribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>发短信 (fā duǎnxìn)</td>
<td>send a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>发货 (fā huò)</td>
<td>deliver goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>发工资 (fā gōngzī)</td>
<td>to distribute paychecks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>发状态 (fā zhuàngtài)</td>
<td>post a message on social media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>烧 (shāo)</th>
<th>n. fever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>高烧 (gāoshāo)</td>
<td>high fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>低烧 (dīshāo)</td>
<td>slight fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>退烧 (tuìshāo)</td>
<td>bring down one’s fever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>烧 (shāo)</th>
<th>v. to cook; heat; roast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>烧水 (shāo shuǐ)</td>
<td>boil water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>烧饭 (shāo fàn)</td>
<td>cook a meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>烧鸡 (shāo jī)</td>
<td>roasted chicken; roast a chicken</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Separat Hands
“Break up”

Wǒ men fēn shǒu le.

Example: 我们分手了。

fēn 分 v. to divide; separate; part

fēnlèi 分类 classify; classification
fēnzǔ 分组 divide into groups

fēnjū 分居 live separately/apart (for couple)
fēndiàn 分店 branches

shǒu 手 n. hand

wòshǒu 握手 shake hands
shǒucè 手册 handbook

huīshǒu 挥手 wave one’s hand
shǒuzhǎng 手掌 palm

qiānshǒu 牵手 hold hands
shǒuzhǐ 手指 fingers
### School Grass / School Flower

“Best looking guy / Best looking girl”

Alice shì xiàohuā.

**Example:** Alice 是校花。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Xiào</th>
<th>n. school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gāoxiào</td>
<td>higher educational institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yèxiào</td>
<td>night school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jìxiào</td>
<td>technical school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mǔxiào</td>
<td>alma mater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cǎo</th>
<th>n. grass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>qīngcǎo</td>
<td>green grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zácǎo</td>
<td>wild grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cǎoyuán</td>
<td>prairie lit: grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cǎodi</td>
<td>lawn lit: grassplot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Huā</th>
<th>n. flower</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>méiguīhuā</td>
<td>rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bāihéhuā</td>
<td>lily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huāpén</td>
<td>flower pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huābù</td>
<td>printed fabric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wind Cloud Person
“Mover or Shaker”

Example: Patrick is a风云人物.

rén 人 n. man; person; people

réncái 人才 talents
rénkǒu 人口 population
réngōng 人工 labor

rén 人 n. people with certain occupation

lièrén 猎人 hunter
gōnggrén 工人 worker
fāyánrén 发言人 spokesperson

wù 物 n. thing; matter; material

dúwù 读物 reading material
chǎnwù 产物 product; outcome
bāowù 宝物 treasure; lit: valuable thing
wénwù 文物 cultural relic/remain

dòngwù 动物 animal
chǒngwù 宠物 pet
rénwù 怪物 monster
shēngwù 生物 living creature (biology)
Eight Symbols
“Gossip/Gossips/Gossipy”

Alice bāguà měi gè péngyǒu.

*Example:* Alice 八卦每个朋友。

bāguà
八卦 v. to gossip

Tā xǐhuān bāguà biérén.
He likes 八卦别人。
*He likes to gossip about others.*

Anita zài bāguà Haley.
Anita 在 八卦 Haley.
*Anita is gossiping about Haley.*

bāguà
八卦 n. gossip

Tāmen zài shuō bāguà.
他们在说 八卦。
*They are sharing gossip.*

Tā gàosù wǒ yì xiē bāguà.
她告诉我一些八卦。
*She told me some gossip.*

Lisa hěn bāguà.
Lisa 很 八卦。
*Lisa is very gossipy.*

Wǒ bú xǐhuān bāguà méiti.
我不喜欢八卦媒体。
*I don’t like gossipy media.*
wúliáo 无聊  Without Sustenance  “Boring/Bored”

Zhè ge huàtí hěn wúliáo.

Example: 这个话题很无聊。

wú 无  v. not have; be without

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th align="center">Tā hěn wúzhī. 他很无知。</th>
<th align="center">wúzhī 无知  without knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td align="center">He is very ignorant. Lit: without knowledge.</td>
<td align="center"></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th align="center">Tā de hùzhào wúxiào. 他的护照无效。</th>
<th align="center">wúxiào 无效  without validity; invalidation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td align="center">His passport is invalid. Lit: without validation</td>
<td align="center"></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 聊 liáo can mean “sustenance,” but is more commonly used as a verb, meaning “chat” or “chatting,” either face to face or online.

liáo 聊 v. chat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th align="center">Tāmen zài liáotiān. 他们在聊天。</th>
<th align="center">liáo 聊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td align="center">They are chatting.</td>
<td align="center"></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th align="center">Tāmen shì wǎngliáo rènshi de. 他们是网聊认识的。</th>
<th align="center">liáo 聊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td align="center">They met each other through online chatting.</td>
<td align="center"></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th align="center">Niánqīngrén xǐhuān qúnliáo. 年轻人喜欢（上网）群聊。</th>
<th align="center">liáo 聊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td align="center">Young people like （online）group chatting.</td>
<td align="center"></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Inside Cloud Inside Fog**

“*In a Fog*”

例句：

我听得云里雾里的。

### 云

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yún</th>
<th>n. cloud</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>báiyún</td>
<td>white cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wūyún</td>
<td>dark cloud; black cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yún jisùán</td>
<td>cloud computing (lit. cloud calculating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mógu yún</td>
<td>mushroom cloud</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 多云

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>duōyún</th>
<th>adj. cloudy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>duō yún yǒu yǔ</td>
<td>cloudy and raining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duō yún de tiānqì</td>
<td>cloudy sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qíng zhuǎn duō yún</td>
<td>sunny turning to cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duō yún zhuǎn qíng</td>
<td>cloudy to sunny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 雾

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wù</th>
<th>n. fog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wùqì</td>
<td>mist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wūmái</td>
<td>smog lit: fog smog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wūdēng</td>
<td>fog light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pēn wù qì</td>
<td>atomizer; sprayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 里

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lǐ</th>
<th>prep. in; inside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jiā lǐ</td>
<td>in the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chē lǐ</td>
<td>in the car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xuéxiào lǐ</td>
<td>in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiàoshì lǐ</td>
<td>in the classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 翻译

例句：

我听得云里雾里的。

**白 云**

white cloud

**乌 云**

dark cloud; black cloud

**云 計 算**

cloud computing (lit. cloud calculating)

**蘑 菇 云**

mushroom cloud

**多 云**

adj. cloudy  
lit: many cloud

**多 云 有 雨**

cloudy and raining

**多 云 的 天 气**

cloudy sky

**晴 轉 多 云**

sunny turning to cloudy

**多 云 轉 晴**

cloudy to sunny

**雾 氣**

mist

**霧 霾**

smog lit: fog smog

**雾 灯**

fog light

**喷 雾 器**

atomizer; sprayer

**家 里**

in the house

**车 里**

in the car

**学 校 里**

in the school

**教 室 里**

in the classroom
帮倒忙

Nǐ zài bāngdàománg.

Example: 你在帮倒忙。

bāng

帮 v. to help; assist

Wǒ bāng tā xiū diànnǎo.
我帮她修电脑。
I helped her to fix the computer.

Péngyǒu zhī jiān yīnggāi hùxiāng bāngzhù.
朋友之间应该互相帮助。
Friends should help each other.

Hùshì bāngzhù yīshēng.
护士帮助医生。
The nurse assisted the doctor.

dào

倒 adj. reverse; converse; upside down.

Zhàopiàn guà dào le.
照片（挂）倒了。
The picture is upside down.

Shuǐ lǐ de dàoyǐng hěn měi.
水里的倒影很美。
The reflection in the water is very beautiful.

máng

忙 adj. busy; fully occupied

Wǒ jīntiān hěnmáng.
我今天很忙。
I am busy today.

Wǒ shōumò bùmáng.
我周末不忙。
I am not busy this weekend.
xiǎoqìguǐ  
**Little Air Ghost**  
“Cheapskate”

**Example:** Kyle shì ge xiǎo qì guǐ.

qi
气  n. air; weather; gas

dǎ qi  
打气  blow up; inflate

tòuqì  
透气  take in fresh air; let air in

guī
鬼  n. ghost; bad habit/behavior

guǐjié  
鬼节  Ghost Festival

guīhún  
鬼魂  ghost spirit

guīchéng  
鬼城  ghost city

jǐnguǐ  
酒鬼  heavy drinker

yānguǐ  
烟草鬼  heavy smoker

lìnsèguǐ  
吝啬鬼  mean person; miser

tāoyánguǐ  
讨厌鬼  detestable person

Video

- [YouTube](#)
- [优酷](#)

Learn a Chinese Phrase

- [YouTube](#)
- [优酷](#)
Bàdào  
**霸道**  
*Kingly Way*  
*“Bossy”*

Lǎobǎn zhēn bàdào.  
**Example:**  
老 板 真 霸 道。

** bà  
霸 n. king; tyrant; despot**

** bàwáng  
霸 王  
king; tyrant; despot**

** bàquán  
霸 权  
supremacy; lit: “king power”**

** bàzhǔ  
霸 主  
overlord; feudal-lord; leader  
in a given field**

** dào  
道 n. physical road/path;**

** jiēdào  
街 道  
street**

** rénxíng dào  
人 行 道  
pedestrian road  
Lit: “people walk road”**

** wāndào  
弯 道  
curve (in a road)  
lit: “curved road”**

** bà  
霸 + v = v**

** bàzhàn  
霸 占  
forcibly occupy; seize;**

** chēngbà  
称 霸  
dominate; tyrannize**

** dào  
道 n. art; technique; skill**

** chádào  
茶 道  
tea ceremony;**

** huādào  
花 道  
(art of )flower arrangement**

** méndào  
门 道  
way; means; method**