



Introduction

First Impressions - Wow Your Chinese Friends!

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Simplified Chinese

你好。
你好。你叫什么名字？
我叫子安。
很高兴认识你。

Traditional Chinese

你好。
你好。你叫什麼名字？
我叫子安。
很高興認識你。

Pinyin

Nǐhǎo.
Nǐhǎo. Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?
Wǒ jiào Zǐ ān.
Hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ.

English

Hello.
Hello. What is your name?
I'm Zi An.
Nice to meet you.

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
什么	什麼	shénme	what
认识	認識	rènshi	to know
你	你	nǐ	you



叫	叫	jiào	to call
名字	名字	míngzi	name
很	很	hěn	very
高兴	高興	gāoxìng	happy
你好	你好	nǐhǎo	hello
您好	您好	nínhǎo	hello

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

你叫什么名字? 很高兴认识你。 是你吗? 你是我最喜欢的作家!	Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? Hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ. Shì nǐ ma? Nǐ shì wǒ zuì xǐhuan de zuòjiā!	What is your name? Nice to meet you. Is it you? You are my favorite author!
我叫子安。 我忘记他的名字。 你叫什么名字? 这道菜很好吃!	Wǒ jiào Zǐ ān. Wǒ wàngjì tāde míngzi. Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? Zhè dào cài hěn hǎo chī.	My name is Zi An. I forget his name. What is your name? This dish is very delicious!
我很高兴有机会。 你好，我叫王国易。 老师，您好! 你叫什么名字? 很高兴认识你。 是你吗? 你是我最喜欢的作家!	Wǒ hěn gāoxìng yǒu zhè ge jīhuì. Nǐhǎo, wǒ jiào Wáng Guóyì. Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? Hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ. Shì nǐ ma? Nǐ shì wǒ zuì xǐhuan de zuòjiā!	I am very happy to have this opportunity. Hello, I'm Wang Guoyi. Hello teacher! What is your name? Nice to meet you. Is it you? You are my favorite author!
我叫子安。 我忘记他的名字。 你叫什么名字? 这道菜很好吃!	Wǒ jiào Zǐ ān. Wǒ wàngjì tāde míngzi. Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? Zhè dào cài hěn hǎo chī.	My name is Zi An. I forget his name. What is your name? This dish is very delicious!
我很高兴有机会。 你好，我叫王国易。 老师，您好!	Wǒ hěn gāoxìng yǒu zhè ge jīhuì. Nǐhǎo, wǒ jiào Wáng Guóyì.	I am very happy to have this opportunity. Hello, I'm Wang Guoyi. Hello teacher!

Grammar Points

The focus of this lesson is greeting someone and introducing oneself.

你叫什么名字?

Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?

"What is your name?"

我叫子安。

Wǒ jiào Zǐ ān.

"I'm Zi An." (or literally, "I am called Zi An.")

Names in Chinese

Chinese names are made up of two parts. The surname, which comes first, and which consists of one character. Then, the given name, which can be either a single character, or a compound of two characters. Thus, when Chinese names are read, they are always read last name first.

Some famous Chinese people, and their names in Chinese:

毛泽东

Máo Zédōng

"Mao Tse-tung"

孔夫子

Kǒng fūzǐ

"Confucius"

巩俐

Gǒng Lì

"Gong Li"



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The less formal way of asking someone's name in Chinese is:

你叫什么名字?

Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?

"What is your name?"

This sentence, translated literally, means "You called what?" The answer will generally include one's full name; surname first, then the given name. You can also just answer with your given name, but generally Chinese names are given in full when inquired after, as in this response from the dialog:

我叫子安。

Wǒ jiào Zǐ ān.

"I'm Zi An."

You can also say:

我的名字是子安。

Wǒ de míngzi shì Zǐ ān

Both are acceptable ways of saying "My name is Zi An."

Supplementary Sentences:

他叫什麼名字?

Tā jiào shénme míngzi?

"What is his name?"

我忘记他的名字。

Wǒ wàngjì tāde míngzi.

"I forget his name."

Formal method of Inquiring of Someone's Name



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There are two ways of asking someone's name in Chinese. In this lesson, we focus on the less formal method, as in the example above.

The more formal way to ask is to inquire of someone's family name. The more formal way to ask someone's name is:

您贵姓?

Nín guì xìng?

Which literally means, "Your expensive surname?".

This is a very honorable form of address, and the 贵 (guì) is an honorific reference and therefore would not be used when referring to oneself. One would simply answer:

我姓 (Surname).

Wǒ xìng (Surname).

"My surname is (Surname)."

One can also start by introducing themselves either formally or informally, and then, in turn, inquire about the other person's name:

我姓 (Surname). 您贵姓?

Wǒ xìng (Surname). Nín guì xìng?

"My surname is (Surname). What is your surname?"

Cultural Insight

When you begin learning Chinese and interacting with Chinese people, everyone will expect you to have a Chinese name. It may be tempting to pick something that sounds good to your own ear; after all you always hated that name you were stuck with from mom and dad. But take it under advisement... you're going to need to call in a favor on this aspect. Chinese names are full of meaning and not just anything goes! There are certain characters that are last names; not just any word will do. Also, certain combinations of characters are more typically male or female names. So, unless you want to end up with some odd looks and maybe a few

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laughs, make sure to ask a Chinese friend to help you choose an appropriate name.

Sometimes Chinese people will choose a name for you that sounds similar to your English name. Other times, they will choose one that's meaning suits you or your personality or character.

Interestingly, though a foreigner's Chinese name is not really any kind of a legal name, backed up by any kind of identification or anything, once you have one, in China, the name can become official pretty quickly. For example, if a foreigner fills out documents or forms in China, he or she will always be asked for their Chinese name. This Chinese name will even appear on your baby's birth certificate if you have a child in China. So whether you're running from the law, always wanted an alter-ego, nom de plume, or alias... hey, now is your chance!

