

Unit One: Let's Get to Know Each Other

Part I: Listen and Learn

1.

Nǐhǎo
Hello.
你好。

Wǒ xìng Xiè. Wǒ jiào Xiè Dàzhōng.
My last name is Xie. My name is Xie Dazhong.
我姓谢。我叫谢大中。

Wǒ shì lǎoshī.
I am a teacher.
我是老师。

Zàijiàn.
Goodbye.
再见。

2.

Nǐhǎo.
Hello.
你好。

Tā xìng Wáng. Tā jiào Wáng Xiǎohuá.
His last name is Wang. His name is Wang Xiaohua.
他姓王。他叫王小华。

Tā shì xuésheng.
He is a student.
他是学生。

Zàijiàn.
Goodbye.
再见。

3.

A: Nǐ xìng shénme?

A: What is your last name?

A: 你姓什么?

B: Wǒ xìng Xiè.

B: My last name is Xie

B: 我姓谢。

A: Nǐ jiào shénme?

A: What is your (full) name?

A: 你叫什么?

B: Wǒ jiào Xiè Dàzhōng. Wǒ shì lǎoshī.

B: My (full) name is Xie Dazhong. I am a teacher.

B: 我叫谢大中。我是老师。

A: Xièxie.

A: Thank you.

A: 谢谢。

4.

A: Tā xìng shénme?

A: What's his last name?

A: 他姓什么?

B: Tā xìng Wáng.

B: His last name is Wang.

B: 他姓王。

A: Tā jiào shénme?

A: What is his name?

A: 他叫什么?

B: Tā jiào Wáng Xiǎohuá. Tā shì xuésheng.

B: His name is Wang Xiaohua. He is a student.

B: 他叫王小华。他是学生。

A: Xièxiè. Zàijiàn.

A: Thank you. Goodbye.

A: 谢谢。再见。

Part II: Utterances and notes

Please study the following notes by yourself. Make sure that you understand everything. If you have any questions, please send an email message to your instructor.

About the sentences in this unit

xìng in 'Wǒ xìng...' means 'to be surnamed'. It serves as a verb in Chinese while there is no such usage in English. Please pay attention to this. How to say: 'My last name is Smith' in Chinese? It would be: Wǒ xìng Smith.

jiào in 'Wǒ jiào...' means 'to be called'. It also serves as a verb. So 'My name is John.' would be: 'Wǒ jiào John.'

'shénme' means 'what' or 'which'. The literal translation of 'Nǐ xìng shénme?' is: 'What are you surnamed?'

'Wǒ shì...' is similar to English 'I am..'

'I am a student.'	Wǒ shì xuésheng.
'You are a teacher.'	Nǐ shì lǎoshī.

Please note:

- 'shì' in Chinese never changes its form.
- There is no article before the noun in Chinese. So 'a student' is just 'xuésheng', 'a teacher' is 'lǎoshī'.

About the Chinese Pinyin

Chinese Pīnyīn (a Romanized spelling system to represent Chinese sounds) uses the same alphabet as in English with four additional tone markers.

1st tone	2nd tone	3rd tone	4th tone
mā	má	mǎ	mà
mother	hemp	horse	to scold

There are four tones in Chinese. Pay particular attention to tone differences when you listen to recording. Tones make difference in meaning. For example:

The pitch of the first tone is high and long.

The pitch of the second tone is rising and long.

The pitch of the third tone is low and short.

The pitch of the fourth tone is falling and short. See the table below for illustration.

1 high and long	mā	2 rising and long	má
3 low and short	mǎ	4 falling and short	mà

Tones change in connected speech. The actual sound you hear in 'nǐhǎo' is 'níhǎo'. This often happens when a third tone syllable follows another.

Most sounds (consonants and vowels) are **similar** to English sounds, but **not exactly identical**. Please pay close attention to each sound when you learn. The following sounds need particular attention:

- j a consonant, as in 'j' in jeep but not aspirated
- q a consonant, as 'ch' in cheek
- x a consonant, as 'sh' in she
- zh a consonant, as 'j' in jump with retroflexed tongue
- ch a consonant, as 'ch' in church, strongly aspirated and retroflexed
- sh a consonant, as 'sh' in shore, retroflexed
- z a consonant, as 'ts' but not aspirated
- c a consonant, as 'ts' strongly aspirated

- e a vowel, as 'ir' in shirt, or 'ur' in 'turn', not English 'e'

You don't have to learn these individual sounds now. Listen to the recording carefully and pay attention to these sounds. Sounds are best learned in a connected speech.

Part III: New Sentence Modules

1. *What's your last name?*

Nǐ
Tā xìng shénme?

Wǒ
Tā xìng Xiè
 Wáng

2. *What's your full name?*

Nǐ
Tā jiào shénme?

Wǒ
Tā jiào Xiè Dàzhōng
 Wáng Xiǎohuá

3. *I am ... , He is ...*

Wǒ
Tā shì lǎoshī
 xuésheng

Part IV: Practice makes perfect

Can you say the following words in Chinese after learning this unit?

I, you, he, thank you, good-bye, surnamed, called, teacher, student

Please answer the following questions in Chinese. Please speak out. For question c. and e., please tell that you are a student and I am a teacher after you have specified your name and my name.

- a. Nǐhǎo.
- b. Nǐ xìng shénme?
- c. Nǐ jiào shénme?
- d. Wǒ xìng shénme?
- e. Wǒ jiào shénme?
- f. Zài jiàn.

What would you say in the following situations?

Greet a person in Chinese.

Ask what a person's last name is.

Ask what a person's first name (or full name) is.

Say good-bye.