Pinyin Text
(A—Dīng Yī, B—Wáng Èr, C—Zhāng Sān)
A: Nínhǎo, nín guìxìng?
B: Wǒ xìng Wáng, jiào Wáng Èr. Wǒ shì lǎoshī. Nǐ xìng shénme?

English Translation
(A—Ding Yi, B—Wang Er, C—Zhang San)
A: Hello, what is your honorable surname?
B: My surname is Wang. I am called Wang Er. I am a teacher. What is your last name?
A: My last name is Ding and my full name is Ding Yi. I am a student.
第一课 老师和学生
（A——丁一，B——王二，C——张三）
A：您好，您贵姓？
B：我姓王，叫王二。我是老师。你姓什么？
A：我姓丁，我的名字叫丁一。我是学生。
B: Tā shì shéi? Tā jiào shénme míngzi?
A: Tā shì Zhāng Sān.

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B: Nǐhǎo, Zhāng Sān. Wǒ shì Dīng Yī de lǎoshī. Nǐ yěshì xuéshēng ma?
C: Dīng Yī shì xuéshēng, wǒ yě shì xuéshēng, wǒmen dōushì xuéshēng.

B: Nǐ shì Zhōngguó xuéshēng háishì Měiguó xuéshēng?
C: Wǒ bú shì Zhōngguó xuéshēng, yě bú shì Měiguó xuéshēng. Wǒ shì Riběn rén, wǒ shì Riběn xuéshēng.

B: Who is he? What is his name?
A: He is Zhang San.

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B: (Talking to Zhang San) Hello, Zhang San. I am Ding Yi’s teacher. Are you also a student?
C: Ding Yi is a student. I am also a student. We are both students.

B: Are you a Chinese student or an American student?
C: I am neither a Chinese student nor an American student. I am Japanese. I am a Japanese student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>他</th>
<th>tā</th>
<th>pron.</th>
<th>He, him</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>谁</td>
<td>shéi</td>
<td>pron.</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>张</td>
<td>Zhāng</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>last name Zhang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>三</td>
<td>sān</td>
<td>num.</td>
<td>three (here used as a name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>也</td>
<td>yě</td>
<td>adv.</td>
<td>also, too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>吗</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>part.</td>
<td>end of sentence particle to indicate a yes/no question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我们</td>
<td>wǒmen</td>
<td>pron.</td>
<td>we, us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B：他是谁？他叫什么名字？
A：他是张三。

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B：你好，张三。我是丁一的老师。你也是学生吗？
C：丁一是学生，我也是学生，我们都是学生。
B：你是中国学生还是美国学生？
C：我不是中国学生，也不是美国学生。我是日本人，我是日本学生。
1. **Singular Pronouns**

   There are three singular pronouns used for people in Lesson 1: 我 (I, me), 你 (you), and 他 (he, him). Chinese pronouns do not change forms as their English counterparts do. For example, he and him are both represented by 他. In Chinese, whether a pronoun serves as subject or object in a sentence, there is only one form.

2. **Verb 是 (to be)**

   All Chinese verbs are tenseless and do not conjugate when combined with different subjects. The tenses are indicated by time words or grammatical particles in a sentence. In the case of 是 (to be), whether the subject is first person 我, second person 你, or third person 他, or singular or plural, and whether the verb is in past tense, present tense, or future tense, one does not need to use varied forms as in English (am, is, are, was, were, will be, etc.). In Chinese, the verb form does not change at all.

3. **Word Order of Sentence**

   The basic word order of a sentence in Chinese is the same as that in English:

   Subject + verb + object

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

4. **Greetings**

   你好 or its honorific form 您好 is an equivalent to English “hello,” or “hi.” It is an all-purpose salutation. It is an exchanged greeting, so both parties say the same words. 你好吗, similar to English “How are you?,” is formulaic. The answer usually is 还好 (háihǎo, I’m okay) or 很好 (hěnhǎo, good).

5. **Question Words: 谁 (who, whom); 什么 (what)**

   The word order of questions using a question word is the same as the basic sentence order for a statement, with the question word taking the same position that the answer should take in the
sentence. Thus, the word order for the question is the same as that for the answer. This is different from the word order for questions in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>他是谁？</td>
<td>他是丁一。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā shì shéi?</td>
<td>Tā shì Dīng Yī.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>谁是丁一。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is he?</td>
<td>He is Ding Yi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>他姓什么？</td>
<td>他姓丁。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā xìng shénme?</td>
<td>Tā xìng Dīng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>丁有谁？</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is his surname?</td>
<td>He has the surname Ding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Expression of One’s Name: 姓, 贵姓, and 叫**

姓 can be used as a noun (surname) and a verb (have the surname of).

贵 has several meanings, including “honorable” and “expensive.” 贵姓, literally “honorable surname,” is a polite way to ask for another’s surname and is used only in the second person.

您贵姓？

Nín guìxìng? What is your honorable surname?

When answering this question, one should say simply 我姓. …

Never say 我贵姓 … (My honorable surname is …).

姓 is used to express one’s surname, and 叫 (call or be called) is used to express one’s given (or first) name or full name. The following pattern is used:

**Subject 叫 X.**

Subject is called X.

他姓丁, 他叫丁一。

Tā xìng Dīng, tā jiào Dīng Yī.

He has the surname Ding and is called Ding Yi.

7. **Minor Sentences**

When the subject is understood in context, it can be omitted. Such sentences are called minor sentences. For example, in the sentence 姓丁一, the subject “he” is dropped because in this context it is very clear that this sentence shares the same subject as the previous sentence 他姓丁.

8. **Possessive 的**

**Pronoun/noun + 的**

The particle 的 is used after a pronoun or a noun to indicate ownership or possession.

我的  wǒde  my

我的老师  wǒde lǎoshī  my teacher

老师的名字  lǎoshī de míngzi  teacher’s name
A special case in which 的 can be dropped is when it occurs between a pronoun and a word for a relative or person with whom one has an intimate relationship. For example:

我(bāba) my father
你(māma) your mother

9. **Plural Suffix 们**

The suffix 们 is added after the pronouns 我, 你, 他 and 她 (her), or nouns that refer to people such as 老师 and 学生 to make them plural. Note that 们 is used for the plural form only for people, not for animals or inanimate objects.

我们 wǒmen we, us
你们 nǐmen you
他们 tāmen they (all male or mixture of male and female)
她们 tāmen they (all female)
老师们 lǎoshī men teachers
学生们 xuéshēng men students

10. **Chinese Nouns**

Although the singular form and the plural form of a pronoun in Chinese are differentiated by the suffix 们, as seen in note 9, Chinese nouns can be either singular or plural. 学生 (student) can be “a student,” “students,” or just “student” in different contexts. One needs NOT change the original form of the noun, such as adding “s” or “es,” as in English, to make it plural. When a noun appears in a sentence, it can occur by itself or be preceded by a number with a measure word, a possessive pronoun, or other modifiers. Compare the following two sentences:

他是学生。 Tā shì xuéshēng.
他是一个学生。 Tā shì yīge xuéshēng.

These two sentences are the same in English “He is a student.” But in Chinese they have slightly different connotations. 他是学生 emphasizes the identity of the subject. It is in contrast to 他是老师 (He is a teacher).

11. **Chinese Adverbs**

也 (adv.) too, also
都 (adv.) both, all

In Chinese, modifiers always precede the words they modify; thus, adverbs always precede verbs and cannot move around. “I am also a student” and “I am a student, too” both are translated the same way in Chinese: 我也是学生。 Adverbs cannot stand alone; they must be combined with
a verb or an adjective, serving as a modifier. Therefore, there is no equivalent to the English phrase “Me too.” It has to be translated as 我也 + v./adj., with the specific verb or adjective added.

The adverb 都 works in the same way. It behaves differently from “both/all” grammatically. As an adverb, it must precede the main verb or adjective.

Both of us are students. 我们都是学生。 Wǒmen dōushì xuéshēng.
All of us are students. 我们都是学生。

“Both” and “all” are translated into 都 in these examples.

12. Particle 吗

The particle 吗 at the end of a sentence changes a statement into a yes/no question. There are other ways of asking a yes/no question, which will be discussed in future lessons. One usually answers a yes/no question by giving a detailed confirmation or negation in a complete sentence. The brief “yes” 是 or “no” 不是 are often omitted. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>你是学生吗？ Nǐshì xuéshēng ma?</td>
<td>(是，) 我是学生。 Shi, wǒ shì xuéshēng. Yes, I am a student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a student?</td>
<td>(不是，) 我不是学生。 Búshì, wǒ búshì xuéshēng. No, I am not a student.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. A还是B (A or B)

还是 is used in a selective question to connect the two alternatives. A/B can be words, phrases, or clauses. In English, “or” can appear in a statement and in a selective question, for example, “You can go today or tomorrow” and “Do you go today or tomorrow?” However, the two functions of “or” are translated into two different words in Chinese. 还是 is used only in the choice type question. The other word that is the equivalent to “or” in a statement will be introduced later.

你姓张还是姓丁？
Nǐ xìng Zhāng háishì xìng Dīng?
Are you a Chinese student or an American student?

你姓张还是姓丁？
Nǐ xìng Zhāng háishì xìng Dīng?
Is your last name Zhang or Ding?
Chinese Names

Chinese names, especially the names of the Han Chinese, usually have two parts: last name (surname) and first name (given name), as seen in the three names that appear in Lesson 1: Ding Yi, Wang Er, and Zhang San. Ding, Wang, and Zhang are the surnames and Yi, Er, and San are the first names. As you might have noticed, Chinese people place the surname in the initial or first position and the given name second, which is opposite to the Western custom.

According to recent national census data, there are over 10,000 surnames in Mainland China. Half of them are simple surnames with only one character, such as Ding, Wang, and Zhang. The other half are complex surnames with two or three characters, such as Sīmǎ 司马, Gōngsūn 公孙, and Yùchí 尉迟. Most complex surnames originated from minority groups. The top ten surnames that are used by the largest number of people are Lǐ 李, Wáng 王, Zhāng 张, Liú 刘, Chén 陈, Yáng 杨, Zhào 赵, Huáng 黄, Zhōu 周, and Wú 吴. Chinese surnames have different origins from ancient times. Some originated from clan names or place names; some were borrowed from the animal totem of the clan; some were borrowed from the name of the home country, official title, or rank of nobility of one’s ancestor; and some were borrowed from professions.

Characters used in given names are usually auspicious ones or those with positive meanings. Given names usually carry special connotations. They can be imbued with the hopes or wishes that parents have for their children, or reflect the characteristics of the time when the child was born. For example, many of the generation who were born in the early 1950s were given the names “jiànguó” 建国 (to build the country) or “jiànhuá” 建华 (to build China). Nowadays people are very creative in generating names, and the government has had to promulgate laws to regulate the selection and use of names for official registration.

You probably will not find an actual person in China who has the name Ding Yi, Wang Er, or Zhang San. These are highly symbolic names created to facilitate your study, making your first contact with Chinese characters and Chinese names less intimidating.
Answer the following questions.

1. Do you have a Chinese name? 你的中国名字是什么?
2. Find out what your teachers’ and your classmates’ Chinese names are.
3. Identify the surnames that we have learned in this lesson, i.e. 张, 王, 丁, and your surname in the above chart.
老師和學生
（A——丁一，B——王二，C——張三）
A：您好，您貴姓？
B：我姓王，叫王二。我是老師。你姓什麼？
A：我姓丁，我的名字叫丁一。我是學生。
B：他是誰？他叫什麼名字？
A：他是張三。

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B：你好，張三，我是丁一的老師。你也是學生嗎？
C：丁一是學生，我也是學生，我們都是學生。
B：你是中國學生還是美國學生？
C：我不是中國學生，也不是美國學生。我是日本人，我是日本學生。
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>中国</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>德国</th>
<th>中国</th>
<th>印度</th>
<th>英国</th>
<th>意大利</th>
<th>西班牙</th>
<th>加拿大</th>
<th>俄国</th>
<th>日本</th>
<th>韩国</th>
<th>墨西哥</th>
<th>越南</th>
<th>法国</th>
<th>澳大利亚</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhōngguó</td>
<td>Méiguó</td>
<td>Déguó</td>
<td>Yīndù</td>
<td>Yīngguó</td>
<td>Yídáì</td>
<td>Xībānyá</td>
<td>Jiā'nàdà</td>
<td>Rìběn</td>
<td>Làngguó</td>
<td>Mòxīgē</td>
<td>Yuènán</td>
<td>Fàguó</td>
<td>Àoduōlìyà</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>