

Welcome to Crystal Hunters!

We are the world's first epic manga created for the express purpose of learning Chinese from zero.

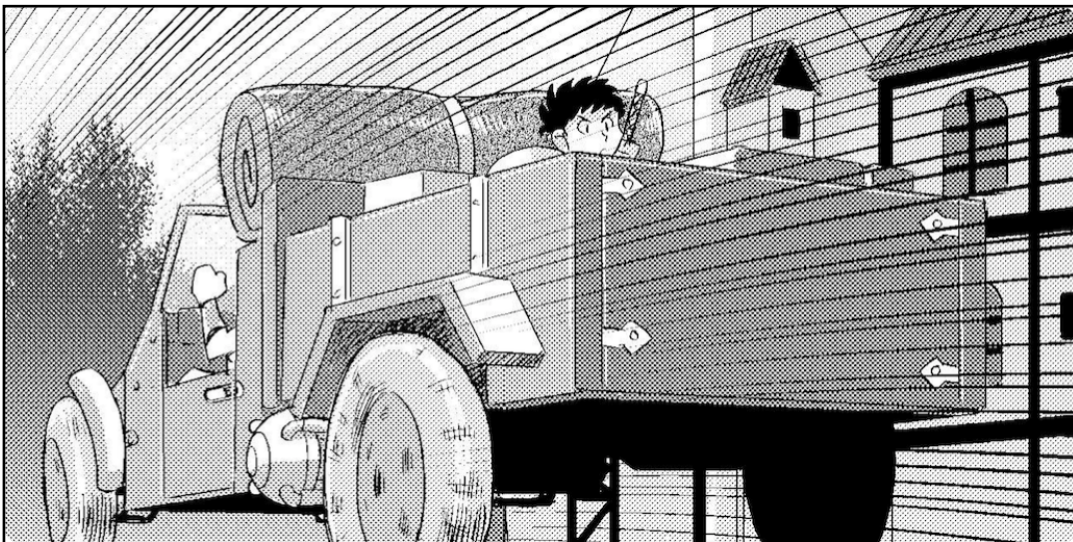
However, Chinese is a hard language to learn. In fact, according to the Foreign Service Institute, it is one of the top 4 hardest languages for native English speakers to learn. But even if you are learning from zero, we believe you can learn to read the first 100+ pages of Crystal Hunters in about a month if you study at a brisk pace, or maybe within a week or two if you blitz it. So, settle in and join us for a fantastical adventure that will give you a sense of accomplishment for life.



Chinese Writing Systems

Let's jump in! Chinese is unique in that it has no alphabet. Everything is written in symbols which are called "hanzi", and there are about 7,000 hanzi which are commonly used in Chinese.

But don't let that big number scare you too much! We have done our very best to keep the hanzi count in Crystal Hunters to a manageable level, and you'll only have to learn 89 unique hanzi to be able to read all the Chinese words in book 1!



Pronunciation

That said, we're going to take a quick detour into pronunciation before we jump into learning hanzi. It'll be important for knowing how to say the hanzi we learn.

Vowels

There are 6 basic vowels in Chinese: a, o, e, i, u, & ü. These 6 vowels can be said as single vowels or can be combined together to form new sounds.

Single Vowels

a – sounds like “ah”.

o – sounds like “oh”.

e – is halfway between “eh” and “uh”.

i – sounds like “ee”.

u – sounds like “ooh”.

ü – this sound isn't in English at all. Start with “ee”, and then round your lips and say it at the front of your mouth so that it has some “ooh” flavor.



Double vowels

ai - sounds like “eye” or the letter “I”.

ei - sounds like the letter “A”

ao – sounds like “ow”

ou – sounds like a longer version of “oh”. Like “ohh”.

i + any vowel has a “ee” + “y” sound before the following vowel(s).

For example: “iao” sounds similar to “eeyow”, but said quickly.

u + any vowel has a “ooh” + “w” sound before the following vowel(s).

For example: “uo” sounds similar to “oohwoh”, but said quickly.

Consonants

There are a lot of consonant sounds in Chinese that don't exist in English. In order to make them as easy as possible to understand, we're going to put them in groups which have similar mouth shapes instead of listing them alphabetically.

Group 1 (lips together)

b – like “p” in English but with much less air (aspiration). It's kind of like how “p” sounds in “spark”. Not so much air after the “p” there.

p – like “p” in English, with lots of air. Like the “p” in “pay”.

m – same as English

Group 2 (teeth + lips)

f – like “f” in English, but a bit softer.

Group 3 (tongue to ridge of mouth)

d – like “t” in English but with much less air (aspiration). It's kind of like how “t” sounds in “start”. Not so much air after the “t” there.

t – like “t” in English, with lots of air. Like the “t” in “top”.

n – same as English, but your tongue is in the same position as d and t.

l – same as English, but your tongue is in the same position as d and t.

Group 4 (back of tongue to back of mouth)

g – like “k” in English but with much less air (aspiration). It's kind of like how “k” sounds in “skill”. Not so much air after the “k” there.

k – like “k” in English, with lots of air. Like the “k” in “kiss”.

h – like “h” in English. but your tongue is in a similar position as g and k, but not quite touching the top of your mouth with the back of your tongue.



Group 5 (tongue behind top teeth)

z – like “tz” in English.

c – like “ts” in English. This is the same as *z* above, but with more air.

s – like “s” in English.

Group 6 (tip of tongue to bottom teeth, front middle of tongue to ridge)

j – like “tz” but with the front-middle of the tongue instead of the tip, and the tip of your tongue is behind your bottom teeth.

q – like “ch” but with the front-middle of the tongue instead of the tip, and the tip of your tongue is behind your bottom teeth. This is the same as *j* above, but with more air.

x – like “sh”, but with a similar tongue position as *j* and *q* above.

Group 7 (tip of tongue to top of mouth a bit behind ridge)

zh – like “z” in English, but with the tip of your tongue lightly touching the top of your mouth a bit behind where you make the *t* and *d* sound. Your tongue gets a bit in the way of the air coming out.

ch – like “ch” in English, but with the tip of your tongue lightly touching the top of your mouth a bit behind where you make the *t* and *d* sound. Your tongue gets a bit in the way of the air coming out. This is the same as *zh* above, but with more air.

sh – like “sh” in English, but with the tip of your tongue in a similar position as *zh* and *ch* above but not touching the roof of your mouth. Your tongue gets a bit in the way of the air coming out.

r – like “l” in English, but with the tip of your tongue in a similar position as *zh* and *ch* above. Your tongue gets a bit in the way of the air coming out.

Group 8 (vowel consonants)

y – like the vowel *i* above, but only at the beginning of a syllable.

Sounds like “ee” + “y” but said quickly.

w – like the vowel *u* above, but only at the beginning of a syllable.

Sounds like “ooh” + “y” but said quickly.

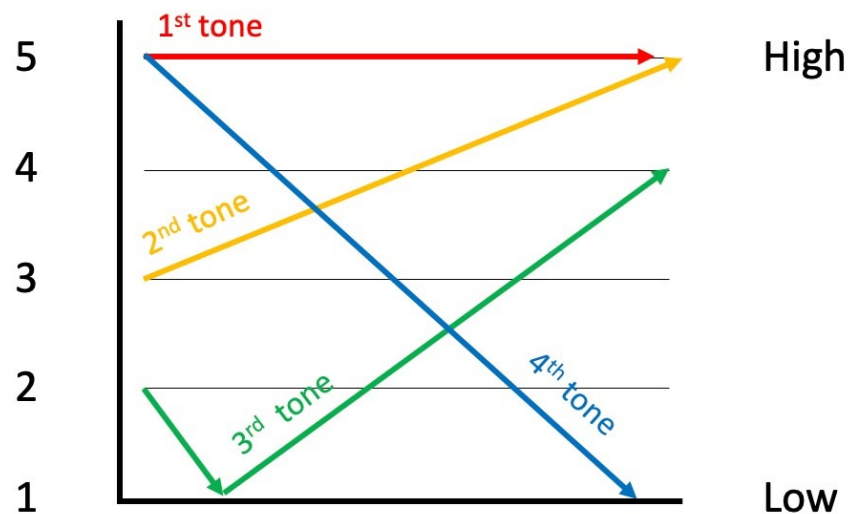
Tones

Tones are yet another unique thing about Chinese! More unique things! Yay! And tones are especially fun too, because It's not just what you say in Chinese, it's how you say it.

We don't have tones in English, but they are super important in Chinese. So important in fact, that Chinese syllables are a bit longer than English syllables (about 50% longer ish) because they need to be long enough so that people can differentiate which syllables are said with which tone.

Why do people need to be able to differentiate which tone a syllable has? Because the meaning of words completely change if we don't use the correct tone! So, when you learn how to say a word, DO NOT just learn the pronunciation. You have the honor, nay the responsibility, to learn the tone too!

Here are the 4 primary tones of Chinese in all of their glory!



Note: both inflection and STRESS are influenced by tone type



First tone:

The first tone is flat, high-pitched, and stressed. It sounds like the “may” in **Maybe**. Or you can imagine saying “**ahh**” at the doctor.

Second tone:

The second tone is the rising tone. Start from medium-pitched to high-pitched. The letters at the end of the syllable with this tone are also said stronger. It sounds like saying the English word “**Huh?**” when you can’t believe the ridiculous thing that the person next to you said.

Third tone:

The third tone falls and then rises again. It sounds like saying “**Well?**” in English when someone is taking too long to reply.

Fourth tone:

The fourth tone starts from very high-pitched but falls down quickly. It sounds like saying the English word “**No.**” in a normal but slightly firm way. Only the letters at the beginning of the syllable are said with more stress.

Fifth tone (neutral):

Although the 4 primary tones get all the status, there is a fifth “neutral” tone which is pronounced lightly without any pitch. Not only that, but it is also said quicker so its only about half the length of the other tones. This kind of “tone” is actually something we do in English a lot! It’s like saying “in” or “of” really quickly.

And that’s it for tones! We’re almost to the hanzi!



Writing Tones With Letters

However, really quick before the hanzi, we need to learn how to write tones in English. And luckily, there's a much easier way to write tones in English than breaking out a tone chart each time. All we have to do is use accent marks!

First tone uses the flat accent mark:

For example: "chapter" = zhāng

Second tone uses the acute accent mark.

For example: "fist" = quán

The third tone uses a dip accent mark.

For example: "you" = nǐ

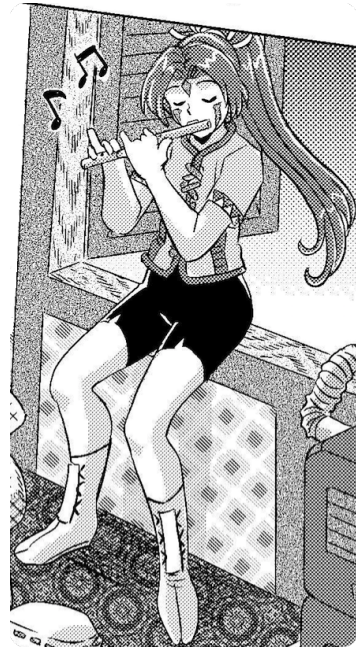
The fourth tone uses the grave accent mark.

For example: "sword" = jiàn

The fifth tone just doesn't have an accent mark.

For example: "let's" = ba

And that's it! Super easy! We're all done with pronunciation and tones now, so it's time for hanzi! Let's gooo!!



Hanzi

It's finally hanzi time!! Yesss!!

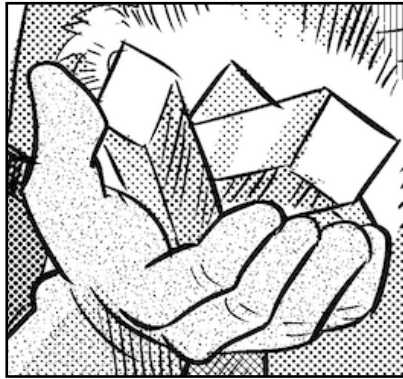
Each hanzi represents a syllable in Chinese, and just like with English some words are one syllable, others are two syllables, and some are even three syllables.

For example:

“You” = 你 ^{nǐ}

“Crystal” = 水晶 ^{shuǐjīng}

“Why” = 為什麼 ^{wèishénme}



In addition, just like English has compound words to form words with new meaning, Chinese also has “compound hanzi” to form different completely words.

For example:

你 ^{nǐ} (“you”) + 好 ^{hǎo} (fine, OK) = 你好 ^{nǐ hǎo} (“hello”)



Chinese also uses compound hanzi in ways that we don't use compound words in English, and this is because you can't just make little changes like adding a letter here or there in Chinese, you have to add a whole new hanzi.

For example:

你 ^{nǐ} (“you”) + 的 ^{de} (possessive hanzi) = 你的 ^{nǐ de} (“your/yours”)

Vocabulary List

Note: If you're having a hard time finding the hanzi you want to look up because you don't know how to read it, check out the [Hanzi Reading Guide](#). It lists the reading and defines every hanzi on each page through the end of chapter 1.

Chapter 1		
Chinese Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
啊	ā	AHH!
吧	ba	let's*
班森	bān-sēn	Bansom (name)
不	bù	no, negation hanzi*
不要	bú-yào	don't (command) / don't want*
打	dǎ	to punch
達芙尼	dá-fú-ní	Daphne (name)
倒	dǎo	to fall
的	de	possession hanzi*
隊	duì	team
給	gěi	to give
怪物	guài-wù	monster(s)
還好	hái-hǎo	to be OK
好	hǎo	fine, ok
和	hé (mainland China) / hàn (Taiwan)	and, with
很	hěn	to be (adjective form)*
劍	jiàn	sword(s)
機器	jī-qì	machine(s)
卡車	kǎ-chē	truck(s)
卡爾	kǎ-ěr	Kal (name)
開心	kāi-xīn	happy
看見	kàn-jiàn	to see
可是	kě-shì	but
可以	kě-yǐ	may, be allowed to, can*
了	le	past tense hanzi*
裡	lǐ	location hanzi*
嗎	ma	question hanzi*
沒	méi	negation hanzi for action verbs*
們	men	plural hanzi*
名字	míng-zì	name(s)
那	nà	that
哪裡	nǎ-lǐ	where

Chapter 1		
Chinese Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
那裡	nà-lǐ	there
難過	nán-guò	sad
男人	nán-rén	man (men)
能	néng	can, be able to*
你 / 妳	nǐ / nǐ	you (male) / you (female)*
你好 / 妳好	nǐ-hǎo	hello*
跑	pǎo	to run
錢	qián	money
去	qù	to go*
拳	quán	fist(s)
人	rén	person (people)
誰	shéi	who
什麼	shén-me	what
是	shì	to be, yes*
樹	shù	tree(s)
水晶	shuǐ-jīng	crystal(s)
他 / 她	tā / tā	he / him // she / her*
停	tíng	to stop
為什麼	wèi-shén-me	why
我	wǒ	I, me
想	xiǎng	to think
向	xiàng	to
想要	xiǎng-yào	to want
現在	xiàn-zài	now
謝謝	xiè-xie	thank you
喜歡	xǐ-huān	to like
也	yě	also, too
一 / 1	yī	one
一個	yí-ge	one individual thing (counter)*
用	yòng	to use
有	yǒu	to have, to exist*
在	zài	to be (location form)*
章	zhāng	chapter(s)
這	zhè	this
這裡	zhè-lǐ	here
知道	zhī-dào	to know
走	zǒu	to go, to walk*

Chapter 2		
Chinese Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
還有	hái-yǒu	in addition
箭	jiàn	arrow(s)
獵人	liè-rén	hunter
力量	lì-liàng	power
女人	nǚ-rén	woman (women)
蘇芭莎	sū-bā-shā	Subasa (name)
新	xīn	new
再見	zài-jiàn	goodbye

Chapter 3		
Chinese Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
城市	chéng-shì	city (cities)
戴文	dài-wén	Devan (name)
家	jiā	house, home
角	jiǎo	horn
夸利亞	kuā-lì-yǎ	Qualia (name)
奈茲	nài-zī	Knites (name)
認識	rèn-shì	to know (someone)
尾巴	wěi-bā	tail(s)
阻止	zǔ-zhǐ	to stop (something)*

**means there will be further clarification in the sections below.*



Multi-Tonal Hanzi

In general, each Hanzi only has one pronunciation and one tone, and these don't ever change. However, there are a few exceptions to this, and some hanzi change tones depending on how they interact with other hanzi.

We have two of these hanzi in Crystal Hunters, and those hanzi are ^{b ù}不 (“no”) and ^{y ī}一 (“one”).

Multi-tonal不

^{b ù}不 has two tones. The fourth tone (bù) and the second tone (bú).

The fourth tone ^{b ù}不 (bù) is used when ^{b ù}不 is by itself, and when it forms another word and the next hanzi is tone 1, 2, or 3.

For example:

^{b ù}不 = “no”

^{b ù hǎo}不好 = “not fine”

^{b ù kāi xīn}不开心 = “not happy”



The second tone ^{b ú}不 (bú) is used when ^{b ú}不 forms another word and the next hanzi is tone 4 or 5.

For example:

^{b ú s h i}
不是 = “am/are/is not”

Although it's not too hard to remember this rule, it is kind of a pain to remember the tone of the hanzi after ^{b ù}不 so you can say ^{b ù}不 correctly as you're experiencing it. But on the flip side, you already know that remembering the tones for words in Chinese is important, so this just gives you even more incentive to remember all those tones well! Yes!

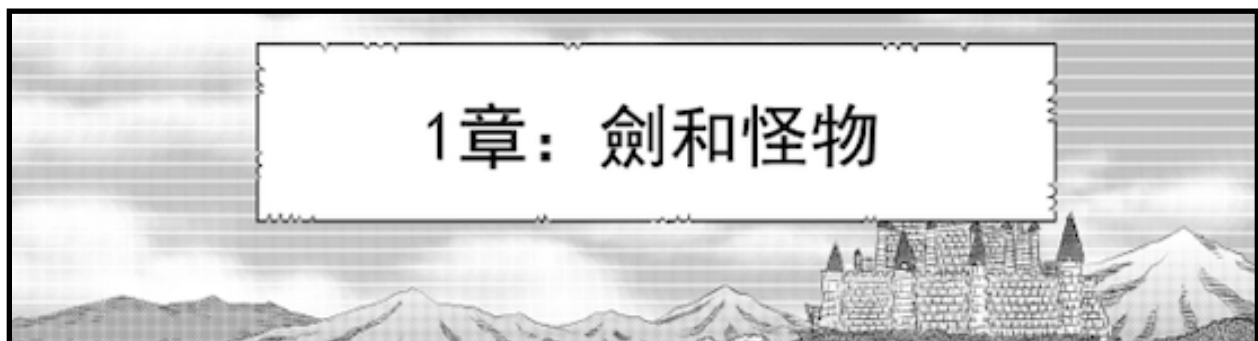
Multi-tonal一

^{y ī}一 is a bit harder than ^{b ù}不 because it uses three different tones. But unlike ^{b ù}不, we actually use these tones to convey different meanings, so using it with the right tone carries a bit more weight than with ^{b ù}不.

For example, when 一 is used by itself, we use the first tone (yī). In addition, it's also considered “by itself” when it's used with another hanzi, but it's not counting something.

^{y ī}
一 = “one”

^{y ī zhāng}
一章 = “Chapter 1” (followed by the title of the chapter)



However, when used together with another hanzi, but it is counting something, then its tone changes!

When 一 is matched with tones 1, 2, and 3, we use the fourth tone (yì). And this is easy to remember, because 不 also uses the fourth tone when it's used with tones 1, 2, and 3 (bù).

For example:

y ī zhāng
一章 = “one chapter” (two chapters, three chapters, etc)

As you can see, the tone of 一 changes the meaning of the hanzi 一章 even though the hanzi themselves don't change. This is both kind of cool and kind of difficult at the same time. But either way, it's just part of the charm of Chinese!

Anyway, the final tone for 一 is the second tone (yí). And just like with 不, 一 also uses the second tone when it pairs with tones 4 and 5.

y í g e
一個 = one individual (as a counter – explained below)

And that's all of the multi-tonal hanzi in Crystal Hunters! And luckily, they operate in mostly the same way as each other so they're not too hard to remember! All you need is a little practice, and the right tone starts to come pretty naturally.

Plus, now that we've finished going over those, we can finally move onto Grammar! Yay!



Grammar

We're finished with pronunciation, tones, and hanzi! Not only that, but grammar in Chinese is relatively easy, so that means all the hard parts are done! Yay! We just have some grammar points to go over and then it's off to the manga!

Basic Sentences

Chinese has the same basic word order as English, which makes things super easy, just do subject -> verb -> object.

For example:

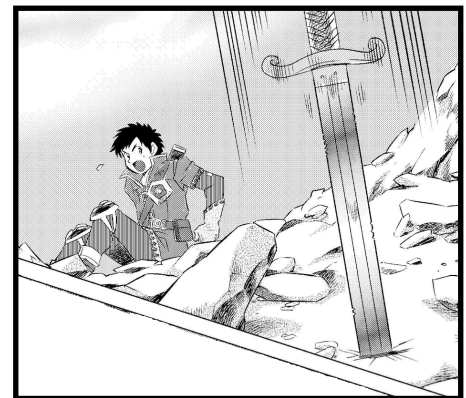
^{wǒ} 我 + ^{yǒu} 有 + ^{jiàn} 劍 = I + have + a sword = I have a sword.

No Spaces

Also, since each word is usually contained within a hanzi or two, it's pretty easy to see where each word starts and ends. And because of this, there's no need for spaces in Chinese. Let's look at this in action using our example sentence from above:

^{wǒ} 我 + ^{yǒu} 有 + ^{jiàn} 劍 = ^{wǒ yǒu jiàn} 我有劍。

When sentences get a bit longer, it can be a bit overwhelming to not see any spaces at first. But all you have to do is look for the hanzi you know and go from there. You get used to it pretty quickly.



Singular/Plural

In addition, although the sentence above was translated as “I have a sword”, it could also be “I have swords”. The reason for this is that Chinese does not often distinguish between one thing and many things by modifying its nouns like English does. So, until further explained, Chinese things are often like Schrödinger's cat in that they are in multiple states of being. They are both one thing and many things at the same time.

There are exceptions to this though, especially when talking about people, and these will be covered in more detail below.



To Be or Not to Be (Times Three!)

But first, let's talk about “be” verbs. The upside of “be” verbs in Chinese is that they never change their form. No “I am”, “you are”, “he is” kind of changes.

However, depending on the situation, Chinese does use three completely different verbs to say “to be”. The difference between them is pretty cut and dry though, so it's not too much of a big deal.

To Be #1 – The Default

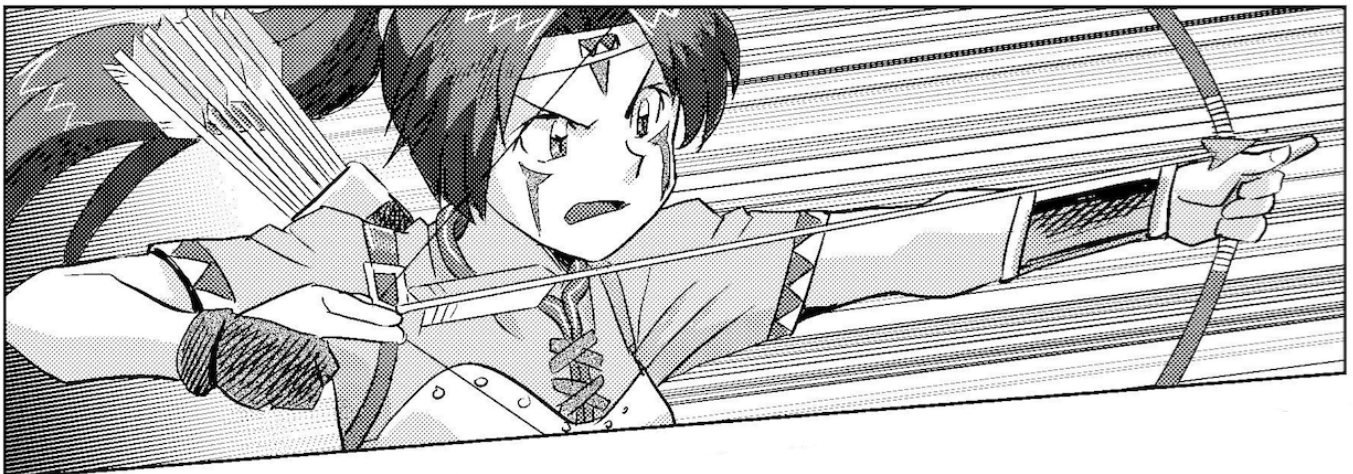
Unless it falls into one of the categories below, the default way to say “to be” in Chinese is 是^{shì}.

You can use this to say someone's name.

zhèshì kǎ ěr zhèshì kǎ ěr
這是 卡爾 = 這是卡爾。 = This is Kal.

Or you can use it to say what someone or something is.

s ū b ā sh ā shì li è rén s ū b ā sh ā shì li è rén
蘇芭莎 是 獵人 = 蘇芭莎是獵人。 = Subasa is a hunter.



To Be #2 – Adjectives

The second way to say “to be” is when you’re describing something or someone with an adjective. When using adjectives, we use ^{hěn}很 .

For example:

bānsēn hěn kāixīn bānsēnhěnkāixīn
班森 很 開心 = 班森很開心。 = Bansom is happy.

nàizī hěn nánguò nàizīhěnnánguò
奈茲 很 難過 = 奈茲很難過。 = Knites is sad.



There is one exception to using ^{hěn}很 for adjectives in Crystal Hunters though, and that is for ^{háihǎo}還好 (“to be OK”). The reason for this is that ^{háihǎo}還好 is an abbreviation of a longer phrase, so we don’t need to use any verb for “to be” here.

For example:

nǐ háihǎo nǐ háihǎo
你 還好！ = 你還好！ = You are OK!



To Be #3 – Locations

The last version of “to be” is with locations and being places, and for these situations we use ^{zài}在 .

For example:

guàiwù zài zhèlǐ guàiwùzàizhèlǐ
怪物 在 這裡！ = 怪物在這裡！
= The monster(s) is/are here!



The Location Hanzi

Speaking of locations, Chinese has a “location hanzi”, and it’s very similar to what we consider a preposition (ex: in, at) in English, but used specifically for locations. This is kind of new grammar-wise for native English speakers, so it’s a little difficult in that sense, but luckily it’s with a hanzi that we already know. In fact, we just saw it in the previous example sentence! The location hanzi is 裡.

(Side note: a cool thing is that “here” (這裡) is just “this” (這) plus location hanzi (裡). So “here” in Chinese literally means “this location”).

Anyway, the location hanzi always goes after the location. And since we’re saying where something / someone is we use 在.

For example:

wǒ zài jiā lǐ wǒ zài jiā lǐ
我 在 家 裡 = 我在家裡。 =

I am home (location). = I am at home.

jī qì zài kǎ chē lǐ jī qì zài kǎ chē lǐ
機 器 在 卡 車 裡 = 機器在卡車裡。 =

The machine is the truck (location). = The machine is in the truck.



GO! GO! GO!

Like with “to be”, there are also multiple verbs for “to go” depending on how we use it. Luckily though, there’s only two verbs for “to go” in Crystal Hunters, so it’s not so bad (and it’s also the last verb with multiple forms, so you won’t have to memorize any more of these!)

To Go #1 – The Default

The default way to say “to go” in Chinese is easy. You basically do a direct translation from English.

For example:

bānsēn zǒu xiàng shuǐjīng bānsēnzǒuxiàngshuǐjīng
班森 走 向 水晶 = 班森走向水晶。 = Bansom goes to the crystals.

guàiwù zǒu xiàng kǎ ěr guàiwùzǒuxiàngkǎ ěr
怪物 走 向 卡爾 ! = 怪物走向卡爾 ! = The monster goes to Kal!



See! Super easy! Let’s go on to verb #2!

To Go #2 – The Location Verb!

When you go to a specific location, you use a different verb to go there. Not only that, but since this verb is “the location verb” you don’t even need to use a preposition with it! It has the “to” meaning built in!

For example:

guàiwù qù chéngshì guàiwùqùchéngshì
怪物 去 城市 = 怪物去城市。 =

The monster goes (location) the city. =
The monster goes to the city.



To Go #2.5 – We’re Going in!

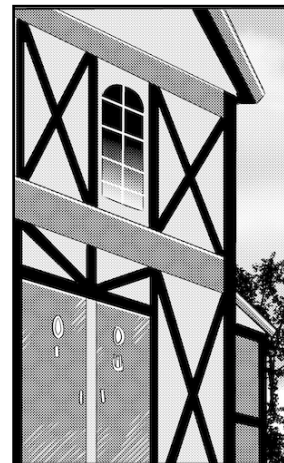
The location hanzi is back! Hurray! This time it combines with the location verb for double the location power! When you get double the location power, you don’t just go “to” somewhere, you go “in”!

Also, although 向^{xiàng} was used before the location in the “To Go #1” example, the location hanzi goes after the location.

For example:

wǒ qù jiā lǐ wǒ qù jiā lǐ
我 去 家 裡 = 我去家裡。 =

I go (location) the house (location). = I go in the house.



The Possessive Hanzi

As we touched on earlier, you can’t just make little changes like adding a letter here or there in Chinese, you have to add a whole new hanzi for things like this.

So, in order to get that possessive “’s” in English, or in order to change “me” into “my” or “mine” or something like that we have to use the possessive hanzi 的^{de}.

For Example:

wǒ de jiàn zài nà lǐ wǒ de jiàn zài nà lǐ
我的 劍 在 那裡 = 我的劍在那裡。 = My sword is there.

wǒ xǐhuān bānsēn de kǎ chē wǒ xǐhuān bānsēn de kǎ chē
我 喜歡 班森的 卡車 = 我喜歡班森的卡車。 = I like Bansom’s truck.



Question Words

When asking questions with question words (who, what, where, when, etc), Chinese rearranges the order of the words so that the question word comes at the end of the sentence. We can do this in English too, although it's less common.

For example:

nǐ shì shéi nǐ shì shéi
你 是 誰 ? = 你是誰 ? = You are who? = Who are you?

shuǐjīng zài nǎ lǐ shuǐjīng zài nǎ lǐ
水晶 在 哪裡 ? = 水晶在 哪裡 ? = Where are the crystals?



The Question Hanzi

For questions that don't have question words, there's a question hanzi you can use! The question hanzi is 嗎^{ma}, and it's like a question mark added to the end of a sentence.

For example, if we add 嗎^{ma} to an example sentence on the previous page, it becomes a question:

wǒ de jiàn zài nǎ lǐ ma wǒ de jiàn zài nǎ lǐ ma
我的 劍 在 哪裡 嗎 ? = 我的劍在 哪裡嗎 ? = Is my sword there?

Since Chinese is a tonal language, being able to add a question hanzi is really helpful because it can be hard to hear an increase in inflection for questions when other tones are involved.



However, there are some situations when neither a question word or a question hanzi is appropriate. For example, when you just say a single word with a question mark. In these situations, you still say the tones like you normally do, but you say them in a slightly higher pitch and you raise the tone a bit more than normal at the end.

For example:

shuǐjīng
水晶?? = Crystals??



The Plural Hanzi

For our next section, we have another special hanzi! Yay! This one makes groups of people plural! All you have to do is take a singular pronoun and add the plural hanzi ^{men}們, and poof! It's a plural pronoun now!

wǒ men wǒ men
我 們 = 我們 = I (plural) = we

nǐ men nǐ men
你 們 = 你們 = you (plural) = you all / y'all

tā men tā men
他 們 = 他們 = he (plural) = they



Gender Pronouns

Since we're talking about pronouns anyway, let's just go over this really quick.

Both "you" and "he/she" are said the exact same way in Chinese. However, they use different hanzi.

You:

nǐ

你 = you (male)

nǐ

妳 = you (female)

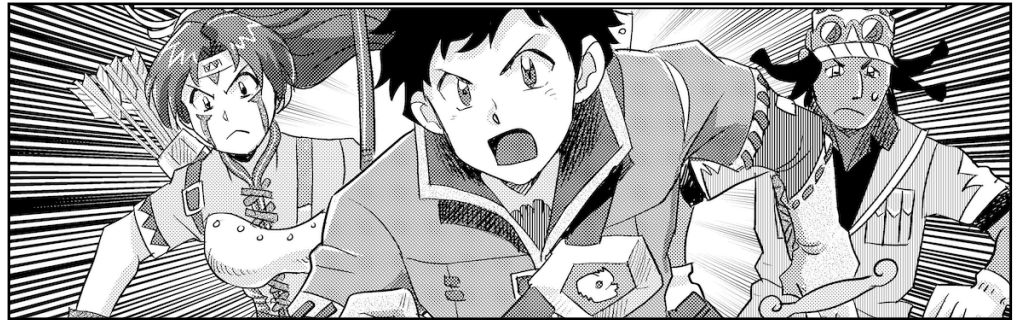
He/she:

tā

他 = he

tā

她 = she



An easy way to remember the differences between these two is that left half of these characters is the only thing that changes, and the left half of the male version looks like 人 (person), and the left half of the female version looks like 女, which is the first half of 女人 (woman).



Gender Representation

In general, it's pretty self-explanatory when to use which hanzi for male and female pronouns, but there are a couple of situations you probably want to be aware of because we don't need to worry about gender in these situations in English.

For example, when you're talking about a group of people, you'll almost always use the male version (even if there's only one man in the group), while the female version is reserved for a women-only group.

t ā men
他們 = they (at least one man in group)

t ā men
她們 = they (all-woman group)



Another situation when you need to be aware of gender is with phrases which have the “you” character in them.

For example, nǐ hǎo 你好. This version of “hello” is being said to a boy/man.

Saying hello to a girl/woman would be nǐ hǎo 妳好.

And not only do you need to worry about gender for “hello”, but you also need to worry about singular/plural!

For example, saying hello to a group of people with at least one man is nǐ men hǎo 你們好, and saying hello to a group of all women is nǐ men hǎo 妳們好.

Overall, gender (and plurals) in Chinese are super simple. There are just a few little things you need to be aware of.

The Singularity

But that's enough with plurals, let's get into singulars! As we mentioned, it's not usually super important to clarify when something is singular in Chinese, but there are instances where it is needed.

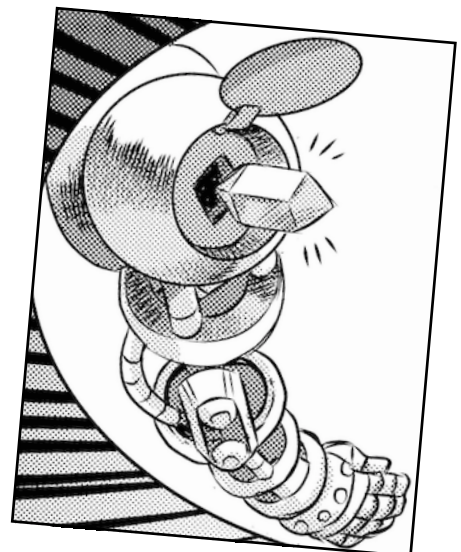
When counting things in Chinese, you usually need to add a “counter”. This means that you usually need to say something similar to “one individual crystal” instead of just “one crystal”.

There are many kinds of “counters” in Chinese, and to be honest we do this in English too to some extent. For example, “One bottle of water.” or “Two vials of potion.” While it's not too hard to use these counters in Chinese, it can be kind of a pain to figure out which counters apply to which things.

Luckily, there's a “general counter hanzi” which is the correct counter for many words in Chinese. As an added bonus, it can also be used to get your meaning across if you can't remember which counter to use. Such is the power of the ^{g e}個 hanzi! All hail the ^{g e}個 hanzi!

Anyway, all you have to do is put the number before ^{g e}個, and then put the thing you're counting after it. Easy!

一 ^{y í} 個 ^{g e} 水晶 ^{shuǐjīng} = 一 ^{y í} 個 ^{g e} 水晶 ^{shuǐjīng} = one individual crystal = one crystal



Out of all the words in Crystal Hunters, there is one word in particular that you need to make sure to specify when it's singular. And that word is “team”. It’s much better to say you’re “a team” than to say you’re “team/teams”. Other than that, singular is optional in our manga.

For example:

wǒmen shì yí ge duì wǒmen shì yí ge duì
我們 是 一個 隊！ = 我們是一個隊！ = We are a team!



Advanced Grammar

We've got the basics of Chinese grammar down! Yay! Now it's time to step things up a bit and have a bit more fun with it! We'll also stop using spaces with Chinese now (but we'll still put the reading on top of the hanzi).

Advanced Word Order

Even when Chinese word order isn't what we usually use in English, it still often uses a word order which isn't completely foreign to us.

For example, both ^{xiànzài} 現在 (now) and ^{yě} 也 (too/also) are placed after the subject of the sentence instead of at the end of the sentence where we normally put them in English. But even though it's not where we usually put them, we do say it like that sometimes.

Example:

^{wǒ xiànzài hěn kāixīn}
我現在很開心。 = I now am happy. = I am happy now.

^{tā men yě yǒu shuǐ jīng}
他們也有水晶。 = They also have crystals. = They have crystals too.



The Versatile 和

However, Chinese word order is not without its differences, and using 和^{h é} to mean “with” is definitely one of those differences. Part of the reason for this is that 和^{h é} is also used as “and”, and to differentiate these meanings the word order is changed up when it means “with”.

If you think about how “and” is usually used, it’s usually used between two nouns in the subject or object.

For example:

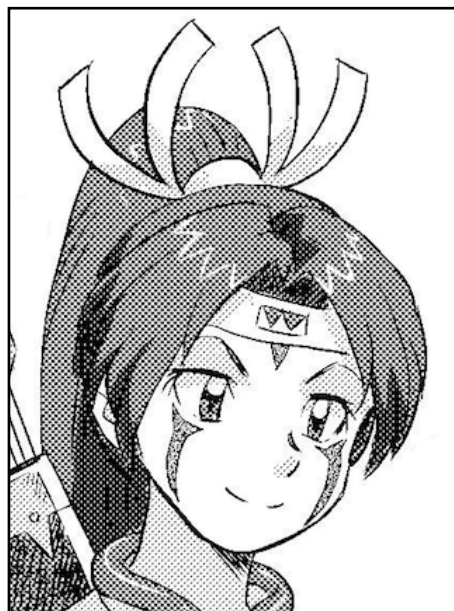
kǎ ěr h é bān-sēn zǒu xiàng guài wù
卡爾和班森走向怪物！ = Kal and Bansom go to the monster!

wǒ yǒu jiàn h é jī qì
我有劍和機器。 = I have a sword and a machine.

So, in order to make sure it’s not misunderstood, 和^{h é} comes right after the verb when it means “with”.

For example:

tā shì h é wǒ yí gè duì
她是和我一個隊。 = She is with me a team. = She is a team with me.



Infinitives

In general, infinitives are super easy! Just smash two verbs together, and poof all done!

For example:

s ū b ā sh ā q ù d ǎ gu ài wù
蘇芭莎去打怪物！ = Subasa goes to punch the monster!

q ù z ǒ u z ǒ u
(去 is used instead of 走 here not because of location, but because 走 has a “to walk” connotation, and walking to punch someone is weird.)
However, when 和 gets involved, it gets to be a touch more difficult, as 和 breaks the two verbs in half.

For example:

n ĭ xi āng yào h é w ǒ sh ì y í g è du ì m a
妳想要和我是一個隊嗎？ =

You (female) want with me to be a team (question) =

Do you (female) want to be a team with me?

Although this is a bit confusing, this is the absolute hardest that grammar gets in Crystal Hunters, so if you can read and understand this sentence, you can read and understand anything.



Saying “NO!”

For most situations in Chinese, negation is super easy! Just add 不^{bù}!

This means for adjectives and some verbs, you just put a 不^{bù} in front of it to negate it.

For example:

bānsēn bù xǐhuān guàiwù
班森不喜歡怪物。 = Bansom doesn't like monsters.

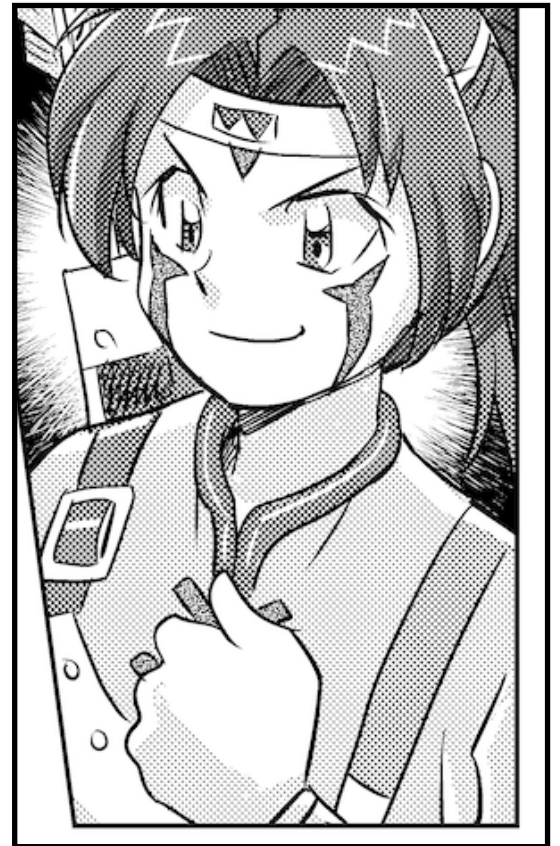
guàiwù bú shì rén
怪物不是人。 = Monsters are not people.



Not only that, but for adjectives the 不^{bù} replaces 很^{hěn}, and 不^{bù} becomes the verb!

For example:

sū bā shā bù nánguò
蘇芭莎不難過。 = Subasa isn't sad.



The Action Cancellor Hanzi

However, there is one situation where ^{bù}不 isn't enough, where you need the power of the canceller hanzi (^{méi}沒) to negate something. And that situation is for action verbs.

Now, you may be wondering, "What is an action verb?" Well, an action verb is a verb where you're doing something. It's when you're "seeing" (^{kànjiàn}看見), "going" (^{zǒu}走), or "punching" (^{dǎ}打). It even works for "having" (^{yǒu}有).

For example:

^{wǒ méi kàn jiàn shuǐ jīng}
我沒看見水晶。 = I don't see crystals.

^{tā men méi yǒu qián}
他們沒有錢。 = They don't have money.



However, as you saw in the examples in the previous page, you don't need the action canceller hanzi if your verb isn't an action verb. Things like "knowing" (^{zhīdào}知道), "liking" (^{xǐhuān}喜歡), or "wanting" (^{xiǎngyào}想要) are all things that are more like making statements about something than doing something, so they use ^{bù}不.

For example:

^{wǒ bù zhī dào}
我不知道。 = I don't know.



Do as I say!

Commands in Chinese are just like they are in English. Just yell a verb at someone, no need for a subject. You can also add additional instructions after the verb if you want.

For example:

qù nà lǐ
去那裡！ = Go there!



Negative commands

Negatives in Chinese also work the same as English, just put a “don’t” equivalent (不要^{bú yào}) in front of the verb!

For example:

bú yào dǎ rén
不要打人！ = Don’t punch people!



However, you do need to be a little careful when you use 不要^{bú yào}. If you add a subject before 不要^{bú yào}, its meaning changes to “don’t want”.

For example:

wǒ men bú yào kǎ chē
我們不要卡車。 = We don’t want a truck.

It’s not hard to tell the difference between these two, but its just good to know that it’s a thing.

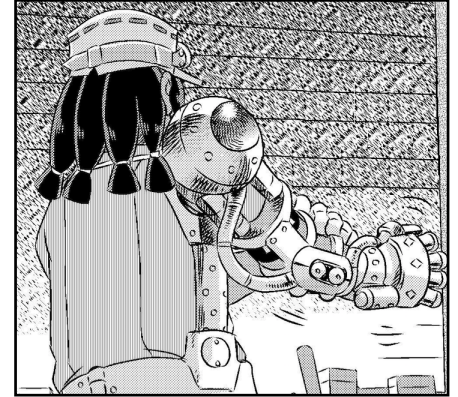
The Past Tense Hanzi

Past tense continues our pattern of easy things in Chinese. All you have to do is take a sentence and then add ^{l e} 了 at the end. Even for Chinese grammar, this is astonishingly easy.

For example:

bānsēn dǎ guàiwù l e

班森打怪物了！ = Bansom punched the monster!



Present-Past Tense

Since the Past Tense Hanzi is so easy, it's used for other things too! In fact, you can pair it up with ^{xiànzài} 現在 ("now") and the resulting sentence stays present tense!

When you use ^{xiànzài} 現在 and ^{l e} 了 like this it has the same meaning as using "now" to indicate that something has changed, and things are different now.

For example:

kǎ ěr xiànzài hěn kāixīn

卡爾現在很開心。 = Kal is happy now. (He just is)

kǎ ěr xiànzài hěn kāixīn l e

卡爾現在很開心了。 = Kal is happy now. (But he wasn't before)



Let's Go!!

There are actually two ways to say “let’s” do something in Chinese. You can use the “let’s” hanzi (吧) after your verb of choice, or you can just put “我們” (we) in front of the verb.

For example:

zǒu b a
走吧。 = Let’s go.

w ō men zǒu
我們走。 = Let’s go.



There is a slight nuance difference between these as (我們走) has a slight “let’s go walking” flavor to it, but for the most part they can be used interchangeably.

In fact, you can even use both 我們 and 吧 together to make:

w ō men zǒu b a
我們走吧。 = Let’s go.

Saying it like this is a bit more formal though.



Yin & Yang Verb Pairs

There are a lot of verbs in Chinese that have both a “passive” (yin) and an “active” (yang) form, (officially called “intransitive” and “transitive”), and we have one example of this in book 1 of Crystal Hunters.

Aside from one being “passive” and one being “active”, yin & yang verb pairs have the same meaning. For example, our first yin & yang verb pair is based around the word “stop”, with one being the passive meaning of “stop”, and one being the active meaning of “stop”.

tíng

停 (passive) – to stop (something stops doing something)

zǔ zhǐ

阻止 (active) – to stop something (something stops something else)

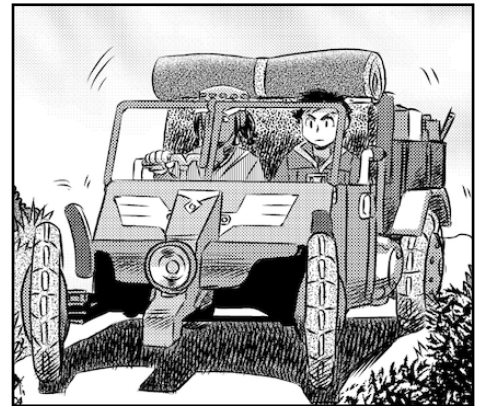
When used in sentences, they look like this:

kǎ chē tíng

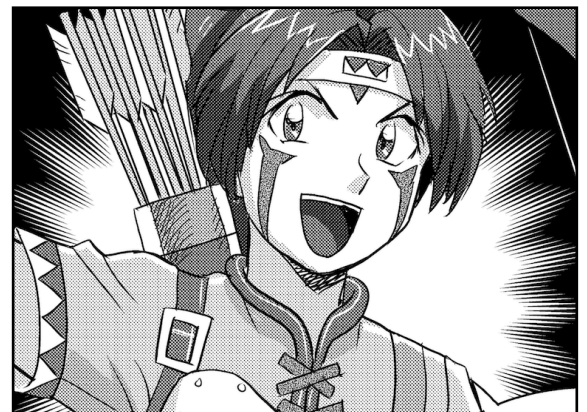
卡車停。 = The truck stops.

bānsēnzǔzhǐkǎchē

班森阻止卡車。 = Bansom stops the truck.



In general, yin & yang verb pairs are fairly easy to understand. However, they can be a touch confusing when you first see them, especially since English sometimes uses the same word for both meanings like with “stop” above. We’ll point them out as they come though, so no need to worry. We got you covered!



Chinese Language Quirks

Last section!! Just skim this quick and go read the manga!!

It Is Because It Is

There are times in Chinese when you start sentences with a verb. And no, we're not talking about command form here, we're talking about sentences which start with "it" in English.

The verbs that work like this are the three "be" verbs we talked about earlier. All you do is start the sentence with a "be" verb and then add your desired ending after it. Then POOF! The meaning of "it" magically comes with it!

For example:

shì wǒ de jiàn
是我的劍！ = It's my sword!

hěn kāi xīn
很開心。 = It's happy.

zài kǎ chē lǐ
在卡車裡。 = It's in the truck.



There Is Because There Is

Just like with “it is”, the phrase “there is” also starts with a verb in Chinese. For “there is” we use ^{yǒu}有 .

For example:

^{yǒu yí gè nǚ rén}有一個女人。 = There is one individual woman. = There is a woman.

You can even put a “there” (^{nà - lǐ}那裡) before the “there is” to show its location, and it still means “there is”. (technically it’s more like “there has” but we would still say “there is” in English.)

For example:

^{nà lǐ yǒu guài wù}那裡有怪物。 = There has a monster. = There is a monster there.

Overall though, both “it is” and “there is” are pretty easy, nice! However, this does mean that if we want to do commands with “be” verbs (^{shì}是, ^{hěn}很, ^{zài}在) and “to have” (^{yǒu}有) we have to use a different method than the normal way to do commands. We won’t get into that now in order to keep things simple, but we’ll touch on it later in the series. Something to look forward to! Yay!



It's not "Can I", it's "May I"

Aside from when we talk to people who are sticklers for grammar, we can use "can" to mean "may" in English. For example: "Can I have that?"

There is also some overlap between "can" and "may" in Chinese, although the rules for this overlap are a bit different than they are in English. So, in order to keep things simple, we're just going to separate them for now (but we'll explain them in detail later in the story).

For now, "can" will be limited to 能^{néng}, and "may" will be limited to 可以^{kě yǐ}.

For example:

wǒ néng pǎo
我能跑。 = I can (am able to) run.

nǐ kě yǐ zǒu
你可以走。 = You may (are allowed to) go.



Answering With Verbs!

Chinese has this cool thing where if someone asks you if you're doing something, you can just respond with the thing you're doing. You don't need to say "yes".

For example:

nǐ kànjiàn nà ma
A: 你看見那嗎? = Do you see that?

kànjiàn
B: 看見。 = See. = Yes, I see (that).



TUTORIAL COMPLETE!!

You are now ready to read Crystal Hunters! Have fun being bilingual enough to be able read an over 100-page manga in Chinese! This is an accomplishment, be proud of yourself! Go start reading the manga.



Traditional Chinese Version: (ebook)

www.amazon.com/dp/B0BG85HW1Y

Traditional Chinese Version: (free)

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