

Learn a Chinese Phrase

**Supplementary
Learner's Guide
1-50**

**Confucius Institute
Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan**



Confucius Institute

韦恩州立大学孔子学院



Learn a Chinese Phrase

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

Learn a Chinese Phrase

Contents

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

Learn a Chinese Phrase

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

Learn a Chinese Phrase

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

Learn a Chinese Phrase

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

Learn a Chinese Phrase

Note to the Instructor

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 shi*” 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 unthreatening 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!

chuīniú pí
吹牛皮

Blowing the Cow Hide

“Exaggerating”

Example: Tā zài chuīniú pí.
他在吹牛皮。

chuī
吹 v. to blow; to inflate

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

Tā zài chuī qìqiú.
他在吹气球。
He is blowing up a balloon.

Xiǎohái xǐhuān chuī pàopào.
小孩喜欢吹泡泡。
Kids like to blow bubbles.

Tā chuī sàkēsī.
他吹萨克斯。
He plays (blows) the saxophone.

Tā chuī húlusī.*
他吹葫芦丝。
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

yí kuài niúpái 一块牛排	a (piece of) steak
yì pán niúròu 一盘牛肉	a plate of beef
yì bēi niúnǎi 一杯牛奶	a glass of milk
yì zhāng niúpí 一张牛皮	a piece of leather

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

kāiyèchē
开夜车

Driving at Night

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

Example: Wǒ zuówǎn kāiyèchē (le).
我昨晚开夜车(了)。

kāi
开 v. to
drive

Wǒ huì kāi chē.
我会开车。
I can drive a car.

Wǒ huì kāi fēijī.
我会开飞机。
I can fly an airplane.

kāi
开 v. to open; to turn on

Qǐng kāi mén.
请开门。
Please open the door.

Qǐng kāi dēng.
请开灯。
Please turn on the light.

chē liàng
车 n. car mw: 辆

kǎchē truck
卡车
huǒchē train lit: fire car
火车
gōngjiāochē bus
公交车
dānchē / zìxíngchē bicycle
单车 / 自行车

yè
夜 n. night

yèshì guàng yèshì
夜市 逛夜市
night market *to visit the night market*

yèbān zhí/shàng yèbān
夜班 值 / 上夜班
night shift *to be on the night shift*

yèwǎn (a more formal variation of wǎnshàng, “晚上”)
夜晚

Cultural Note:

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.

chǎoyóuyú
炒鱿鱼

Fried Squid

“Getting Fired”

Example: Wǒ bèi chǎoyóuyú (le).
我被炒鱿鱼(了)。

chǎo
炒 v. to fry

Wǒ huì chǎo jīdàn.
我会炒鸡蛋。
I can fry eggs.

Tā jiāo wǒ chǎo miàn.
他教我炒面。
He teaches me to fry noodles.

chǎo
炒 v. be fired from a job

Wǒ bèi chǎoyóuyú le.
我被炒鱿鱼了。
I was fired.

Wǒ bèi chǎo le.
我被炒了。
I was fired.

Wǒ bèi lǎobǎn chǎo le.
我被老板炒了。
I was fired by my boss.

yú
鱼 n. fish or fishlike creature

tiáo qún
条 (individual) / 群 (group of)

sānwényú 三文鱼	salmon
shāyú 鲨鱼	shark
èyú 鳄鱼	alligator
jīngyú 鲸鱼	whale

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.

dàdiē-yǎnjìng
大跌眼镜

Glasses Fell off
“Taken Aback” / “Shocked”

Example: Ràng rén dàdiē-yǎnjìng.
让人大跌眼镜。

diē
跌 (+ comp.)
v. to tumble; to fall down

diē jià
跌 (+ 价)
v. to fall in price

Tā diēdǎo le.
他跌倒了。
He fell down.

Tā diēshāng le.
他跌伤了。
He fell down and injured himself.

Tā de fángzi zài diējià.
他的房子在跌价。
His house is falling in price.

iphone 5 diējià le.
iphone 5 跌价了。
iphone 5 has fallen in price.

yǎn
眼 n. eye

yǎnjìng fù
眼镜 n. eyeglasses mw: 副

yǎnjīng
眼睛
eyes

yì zhī/shuāng yǎnjīng
一只 / 双眼睛
an eye/a pair of eyes

yǎnxiàn
眼线
eye liner

huà yǎnxiàn
画眼线
put on eye liner

yǎnjìng
眼镜
eyeglasses lit: eye mirror

tàiyáng yǎnjìng
太阳眼镜
sunglasses

yǐnxíng yǎnjìng
隐形眼镜
contact lens lit: invisible glasses

yǎnjìngjià
眼镜架
eyeglass frame

shuō hǎohuà, shuō huàihuà
说好话, 说坏话

Good Talk/Bad Talk

“Talk up/Talk down”

Examples: Tā shuō le hěn duō nǐ de hǎohuà.
他说了很多你的好话。
Tā shuō le hěn duō nǐ de huàihuà.
他说了很多你的坏话。

shuō
说 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.

To “tell” (a story), use 讲.

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

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

huà
话 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
话 n. dialect

Běijīnghuà
北京话
Beijing dialect

Guǎngdōnghuà
广东话
Cantonese dialect

jiāngxiānghuà
家乡话
regional dialect lit: hometown dialect

géqiáng-yǒuěr
隔墙有耳

Walls Have Ears

“Walls Have Ears”

Example: géqiáng-yǒuěr
隔墙有耳

qiáng
墙 n. wall

zhuānqiáng
砖墙 *brick wall*

chéngqiáng
城墙 *city wall*

qiángzhǐ
墙纸 *wall paper*

qiángjiǎo
墙角 *corner of the wall*

ěr ěrduo
耳/耳朵 n. ear

ěrdīng
耳钉 *earring (stud)*
lit: ear nail

ěrhuan
耳环 *earring (pendant)*
lit: ear hoop

ěrchuí
耳垂 *earlobe*
lit: ear drooping

ěrjī
耳机 *headset/headphone*
lit: ear machine

ěrzhào
耳罩 *earmuff*

Cultural Note:

China's most famous wall, the Great Wall (ChángChéng, “长城”), actually means “long city” in Chinese.

xīnshàng rén
心上人

Person on Top of Your Heart “Sweetheart”

Example: Tā yǒu xīnshàng rén.
他有心上人。

xīn
心 n. heart; mind; feeling; inten-

kāixīn
开心
happy lit: open hearted

Nolan hěn kāixīn.
Nolan 很开心。
Nolan is very happy.

shāngxīn
伤心
broken hearted lit: hurting heart

Katie hěn shāngxīn.
Katie 很伤心。
Katie is very broken hearted.

shàng
上 prep. on top of; in

Yīfu zài chuáng shàng.
衣服在床上。
The clothes are on the bed.

Shū zài zhuōzi shàng.
书在桌子上。
The books are on the table.

Zhōng zài qiáng shàng.
钟在墙上。
The clock is on the wall.

Shù shàng yǒu liǎng zhī xiǎoniǎo.
树上有两只小鸟。
In/on the tree, there are two birds.

xīn
心 n. center; core

zhōngxīn
中心
center

Tā jīngcháng qù yùndòng zhōngxīn..
他经常去运动中心。
He often goes to the sports center.

zhòngxīn
重心
center of gravity

Zhè liàng chē zhòngxīn hěn dī.
这辆车重心很低。
This car's center of gravity is very low.

héxīn
核心
core; nucleus

John Lennon shì Beatles yuèduì de héxīn rénwù.
John Lennon 是 Beatles 乐队的核心人物。
John Lennon is the core person of The Beatles.

huāhuā-gōngzǐ
花花公子

Flower Prince
“Playboy”

Example: Jason shì huāhuā-gōngzǐ.
Jason 是花花公子。

huā duǒ
花 n. flower mw: 朵

huā
花 v. to spend (money or time)

méiguīhuā
玫瑰花 rose

bǎihéhuā
百合花 lily

mǔdānhuā *
牡丹花 peony

tàiyánghuā
太阳花 sunflower

Tā hěn huì huā qián.
他很会花钱。
*He is very capable of spending money.
(He spends a lot of money.)*

Tā huā le hěn duō qián gòu wù.
他花了很多钱购物。
He spent a lot of money shopping.

Tā huā le hěn duō shí jiān kàn shū.
他花了很多时间看书。
He spent a lot of time reading.

Cultural Note:

gōngzǐ vs wángzǐ
公子 vs 王子

gōngzǐ

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."*

你 / 他家的公子。

wángzǐ

王子: *Today, "prince" (the son of a king) is generally translated as 王子.*

rén shān rén hǎi
人山人海

People Mountain People Sea

“Wall to Wall People”

Example: Huǒchēzhàn rén shān rén hǎi.
火车站人山人海。

rén
人 n. people or person

réncái
人才
a talented person

Tā shì gè réncái.
他是个人才。
He is a talented person.

biérén
别人
others / other people

Tā hé biérén yìqǐ dǎ lánqiú.
他和别人一起打篮球。
He plays basketball with others.

rénlèi
人类
mankind; humanity

Kēxué tuīdòng rénlèi de jìnbù.
科学推动人类的进步。
Science pushes humanity's progress.

hǎi
海 n. sea

hǎijūn
海军 *navy* *lit: sea troops*

yì zhī hǎijūn
一支海军 *a navy*

hǎixiào
海啸 *tsunami lit: sea scream*

yì chǎng hǎixiào
一场海啸 *a tsunami*

hǎiyáng
海洋 *ocean*

yí piàn hǎiyáng
一片海洋 *an ocean*

shān
山 n. mountain

zuò
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*

duì niú tán qín
对牛弹琴

Play Zither for a Cow

“Casting Pearls before Swine”

Example: Tā zài duì niú tán qín.
他在对牛弹琴。

qín
琴 n. general name for a musical instrument

tán
弹 v. to play a
stringed instru-
ment that requires
plucking or pound-
ing

gāngqín 钢琴 <i>piano</i>	yí jià / tái gāngqín 一架 / 台钢琴 <i>a piano</i>	Wǒ huì tán gāngqín. 我会弹钢琴。 <i>I can play piano.</i>
shùqín 竖琴 <i>harp</i>	yí bǎ shùqín 一把竖琴 <i>a harp</i>	Wǒ huì tán shùqín. 我会弹竖琴。 <i>I can play harp.</i>

lā
拉 v. to play an
instrument using
a bow

dàtíqín 大提琴 <i>cello</i>	yí bǎ dàtíqín 一把大提琴 <i>a cello</i>	Wǒ huì lā dàtíqín. 我会拉大提琴。 <i>I can play cello.</i>
zhōngtíqín 中提琴 <i>viola</i>	yí bǎ zhōngtíqín 一把中提琴 <i>a viola</i>	Wǒ huì lā zhōngtíqín. 我会拉中提琴。 <i>I can play viola.</i>
xiǎotíqín 小提琴 <i>violin</i>	yí bǎ xiǎotíqín 一把小提琴 <i>a violin</i>	Wǒ huì lā xiǎotíqín. 我会拉小提琴。 <i>I can play violin.</i>

Cultural Note:

Additional verbs in Chinese for playing a musical instrument include:

dǎ
打: to play a percussion instrument by pounding or striking Tā zài dǎgǔ.
他在打鼓。 He is playing the drums.

chuī
吹: to play a brass or woodwind instrument Tā zài chuī dízi.
他在吹笛子。 He is playing the flutes.

Tā huì chuī Sàkēsī.
他会吹萨克斯。 He can play saxophone.

Learn a Chinese Phrase

xīnshǒu
新手

New Hand
“Green Horn” “Newbie”

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

xīn
新 **adj. new**

xīn yīfu 新衣服	<i>new clothes</i>	yì běn xīn shū 一本新书	<i>a new book</i>
xīn wánjù 新玩具	<i>new toy</i>	yì gè xīn wánjù 一个新玩具	<i>a new toy</i>
xīn gē 新歌	<i>new song</i>	yì shǒu xīn gē 一首新歌	<i>a new song</i>

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

xīn lái de xuésheng
新来的学生
newly-arrived student

xīn mǎi de chē
新买的车
newly-bought car

Xīn xiě de shū
新写的书
newly-written book(s)

shǒu
手 **n. a person associated with a job or profession**
gè wèi
mw: 个; 位 (respect);

gēshǒu
歌手 *singer* *lit: song hand*

gǔshǒu
鼓手 *drummer* *lit: drum hand*

zhùshǒu
助手 *assistant* *lit: assist hand*

bāngshǒu
帮手 *helper* *lit: help hand*

shuǐshǒu
水手 *sailor* *lit: water hand*

hútuchóng
糊涂虫

Mixed-up Bug
"Space Cadet"

Example: Tā shì gè hútuchóng.
他是个糊涂虫。

hútu
糊涂 **adj. muddled or confused**

hútu zhàng
糊涂账 *chaotic financial records lit: muddled records*

Zhè shì yì bǐ hútu zhàng.
这是一笔糊涂账。 *This is a muddled account.*

zhuāng hútu
装糊涂 *pretend to be confused (play dumb)*

Tā zài zhuāng hútu.
他在装糊涂。 *He is playing dumb.*

Wǒ yǒu diǎnr hútu.
我有点儿糊涂。 *I'm a little bit confused.*

chóng
虫 **n. insect or worm**

zhī
只 **mw:**

kūnchóng
昆虫 *insect*

hàichóng
害虫 *pests*

huángchóng
蝗虫 *locust*

piáochóng
瓢虫 *ladybug*

máomaochóng
毛毛虫 *caterpillar*

yínghuǒchóng
萤火虫 *fire fly*

chàng fǎndiào
唱反调

Sing the Opposite Tune

“Naysayer”/“Contrarian”

Example: Nǐ gēn wǒ chàng fǎndiào.
你跟我唱反调。

chàng
唱 v. to sing

dúchàng
独唱
solo

chóngchàng
重唱
duet lit: layer singing

héchàng
合唱
choir lit: together singing

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

Yìngbì de fǎnmiàn yǒu yì duǒ huā.
硬币的反面有一朵花。
The coin's reverse side has a flower.

Tā bǎ wàzi chuān fǎn le.
他把袜子穿反了。
He wears his socks inside out.

Túshūguǎn zài yīyuàn de fǎn fāngxiàng.
图书馆在医院的反方向。
The Library is in the opposite direction of the hospital.

diào
调 n. tune/key

qǔdiào
曲调 *tune; melody*

zǒudiào
走调 *out of tune; off key*

lǎodiào
老调 *old tune*

gāo/low/diào
高 / 低 / C 调
high key/low key/the key of C

diào
调 n. tone

dì yī shēngdiào
第一声调 *first tone*

dì èr shēngdiào
第二声调 *second tone*

shēngdiào
升调 *rising tone*

jiàngdiào
降调 *falling tone*

báifèi kǒushé
白费口舌

Wasting Mouth and Tongue

“Wasting Your Breath”

Example: Nǐ báifèi kǒushé.
你白费口舌。

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

Zhè jiàn shì hěn fèi shíjiān.
这件事很费时间。
It takes a lot of time.

Dǎsǎo fángjiān hěn fèilì.
打扫房间很费力。
Cleaning the house takes a lot of

fèi
(交/付+) 费 n. fee

xuéfèi
学费 *tuition lit: study fee*

shuǐdiànfèi
水电费 *utilities lit: water and electricity fee*

yóufèi
邮费 *postage lit: postage fee*

báifèi
白费 v. to waste

báifèi jīnglì
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 lìqì
白费力气
to waste strength

kǒu
口 n. mouth

kǒuxiāngtáng
口香糖
chewing gum lit: mouth fragrant candy

Tā zài jiáo kǒuxiāngtáng.
他在嚼口香糖。
He is chewing gum.

kǒuyǔ
口语
spoken language lit: mouth language

Tā zài liànxí zhōngwén kǒuyǔ.
他在练习中文口语。
He is practicing spoken Chinese.

luóbo báicài
萝卜白菜

Radish Cabbage

"To Each Their Own"

Example: Luóbo báicài, gè yǒu suǒ ài.
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.

他在院子里种菜。

He plants vegetables in the yard.

diǎn cài

点菜

to order food (at a restaurant)

Tā zài fàndiàn diǎn cài.

他在饭店点菜。

He is ordering food at a restaurant.

ài
爱 n. love; affection

ài
爱 v. be fond of; to love

zhēn'ài

真爱

true love

mǔ'ài fù'ài

母爱 / 父爱

maternal love / paternal love

yǒu'ài

友爱

friendly love

Tā hěn ài guó.

他很爱国。

He is very patriotic.

Wǒ ài tīng yīnyuè.

我爱听音乐。

I'm fond of listening to music.

Wǒ ài wǒ de mǔqīn.

我爱我的母亲。

I love my mom.

léirén
雷人

Thundering Someone

“Shocking Someone”

Example: Nǐ de yīfu hěn léirén.
你的衣服很雷人。

léi
雷 n. thunder

léi kē
雷 n. mine mw: 颗

léiyǔ
雷雨 *thunderstorm*

dìléi
地雷 *land mine*

léidiàn
雷电 *thunder and lightning*

yúléi
鱼雷 *torpedo lit: fish mine*

léishēng
雷声 *thunderclap*

shǒuléi
手雷 *grenade lit: hand mine*

Caution:

léi
“雷” is only used as a verb with
rén
the noun “人”.

hěn léirén
很雷人 *very shocking*

tèbié léirén
特别雷人 *extremely shocking*

Cultural Note:

Wàimiàn diàn shǎn léi míng.
外面电闪雷鸣。
Outside it's lightning and thundering.

lit: Outside electricity strikes and thunder sounds.

gěilì
给力

Giving Strength

“Encouraging/ Flattering”

Example: Nǐ de lǎoshī hěn gěilì.
你的老师很给力。

gěi gěi
给 v. to give (给+sb.+sth.)

gěi bǎ gěi
给 v. to give (把+sth.+给+sb.)

Qǐng gěi wǒ yàoshi.
请给我钥匙。
Please give me the keys.

Qǐng bǎ shū gěi wǒ.
请把书给我。
Please give me the book.

Bié gěi tā zhàopiàn.
别给他照片。
Please don't give him the photos.

Bié bǎ pánzi gěi tā.
别把盘子给他。
Please don't give him the plates.

lì
力 n. power; strength; ability

tīnglì
听力 *hearing or listening ability*

wǒlì
握力 *grip strength*

jìyì lì
记忆力 *ability to remember/memorize*

Cultural Note:

gěilì
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”.

diàndēngpào
电灯泡

Light Bulb
"Third Wheel"

Example: Tā shì gè diàndēngpào.
他是个电灯泡。

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
mw: 盏; 个

lùdēng
路灯 *street light*

táidēng
台灯 *table/desk lamp*

dēngtǎ
灯塔 *lighthouse*

hónglǜdēng
红绿灯 *traffic lights*

pào
泡 n. bubble; blister; some-
thing shaped like bubbles mw: 个

qìpào
气泡 *air bubbles*
(i.e. carbonated beverage)

qìpào 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.
他脚上起泡了。
He has blisters on his feet.

pào
泡 v. to soak; to steep

pàocài
泡菜 *kimchi*

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

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

Wǒ gěi kèrén pàochá.
我给客人泡茶。
I make/steep/brew tea for the guests.

zhùì rù àihé
坠入爱河

Fall into Love River

"Fall in Love"

Example: Nǐ zhùì rù àihé le.
你坠入爱河了。

zhùì
坠 v. to fall; to drop; to tumble

zhùì gè
坠 n. weight; hanging object mw: 个

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

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

diàozhùì
吊坠 *pendant of a jewelry*

qiānzhùì
铅坠 *plumb bob*

ěr zhùì
耳坠 *dangling earring*

hé tiáo
河 n. river mw: 条

入 v. enter; join; become a member

Huáng Hé
黄河 *the Yellow River **

hé'àn
河岸 *river bank*

héliú
河流 *river*

yùnhé
运河 *canal*
lit: transporting river

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 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.

ànliàn
暗恋

Dark Love
“To Have a Secret Crush”

Example: Tā ànliàn nàge nǚhái.
他暗恋那个女孩儿。

àn
暗 adj. dark; dim

Tā chuānzhe yì tiáo àn hóng de qúnzi.
她穿着一条暗红的裙子。
She is wearing a dark red dress.

Zhè ge fángjiān de dēng tài àn le.
这个房间的灯太暗了。
This room's light is too dark.

liàn
恋 v. to love; to long for

Tāmen liànnài le.
他们恋爱了。
They are in love.

Tā hěn liànjiù.
他很恋旧。
He is sentimental/nostalgic.

Tā shì gè liànjiā de rén.
他是个恋家的人。
He is a family (focused) person.

àn
暗 adj. hidden; secret

ànhào
暗号
secret code or signal
lit: secret number
Qǐng shuō chū ànhào.
请说出暗号。
Please state the secret code.

ànqì
暗器
hidden/concealed weapon
Tā dài zhe ànqì.
他带着暗器。
He is carrying concealed

Cultural Note:

In mainland China: 爱人 (àirén) generally refers to one's spouse; 恋人 (liànrén) generally refers to a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

ěr páng fēng
耳旁风

Wind by the Ear
"In One Ear and Out the Other"

Example: Wǒ bǎ tài tai de huà dāng ěr páng fēng.
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。
He is standing at the road side.

páng tīng
旁听
attend/audit as a visitor

páng guān
旁观
stand by

páng mén
旁门
side door

Tā cóng páng mén zǒu jìn lái.
他从旁门走进来。
He walks in through the side door.

Wǒ páng tīng tā de kè.
我旁听他的课。
I sit in on his class.

Alice hé Nolan zài dǎ jià, Melinda zài páng guān.
Alice和Nolan在打架，Melinda在旁观。
Alice and Nolan are fighting, Melinda is standing by.

fēng
风 n. wind

wēi fēng
微风 breeze

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

dà fēng
大风 gale

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

lóng juǎn fēng
龙卷风 tornado
lit: dragon curl wind

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

tái fēng
台风 typhoon

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

Learn a Chinese Phrase

wàn rén mí
万人迷

10,000 Fans
“Extremely Popular Person”

Example: Nolan shì gè wàn rén mí.
Nolan 是个万人迷。

wàn
万 num. ten thousand

liǎng wàn yuán
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'ēn zhōulì dàxué yǒu 29,000 míng xuésheng.
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

Dǐtèlù yǒu 675,000 rén.
底特律有 675,000 人。
Detroit has 675,000 people.

mí
迷 n. fan; aficionado

mírén
迷人 adj. attracting; charm-

bàngqiú mí
棒球迷 *baseball fan*

jīngjù mí
京剧迷 *Beijing opera fan*

gǎnlǎnqiú mí
橄榄球迷 *(American) football fan*

gōngfu diànyǐng mí
功夫电影迷 *Kung fu movie fan*

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.

luò tāng jī
落汤鸡

Fallen into Soup Chicken

“A Drowned Rat”

Example: Nǐ xiàng yí gè luò tāng jī.
你像一个落汤鸡。

luò
落 v. to fall; to drop

Huā kāi huā luò.
花开花落。
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 wǎn
汤 n. soup mw: 碗

mǐtāng
米汤 rice broth

ròutāng
肉汤 meat soup

dòufu tāng
豆腐汤 tofu soup

jīdàn 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

Example: Sofiá zài bāo diàn huà zhōu.
Sofiá 在煲电话粥。

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

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.

bāo
煲 n. pot

diànfàn bāo
电饭煲 *rice cooker*
lit: electric rice pot

qíe zi bāo
茄子煲 *eggplant casserole*

dòufu bāo
豆腐煲 *tofu casserole*

zhōu
粥 n. porridge; gruel; congee

wǎn
碗 mw: 碗

báizhōu
白粥 *plain gruel*

shūcài zhōu
蔬菜粥 *vegetable congee*

hǎixiān zhōu
海鲜粥 *seafood 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.”

jī dàn lǐ tiāo gǔ tóu
鸡蛋里挑骨头

Picking Bones Out of Eggs

“Nitpick”

Example: Nǐ zài jīdàn lǐ tiāo gǔtóu.
你在鸡蛋里挑骨头。

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

Tā tiāo chū làn píngguǒ.
他挑出烂苹果。
He picks out the rotten apples.

Tā tiāochū yú cì.
他挑出鱼刺。
He picks out the fish bones.

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

Cóng zhè xiē chèn yī zhōng tiāo liǎng jiàn.
从这些衬衣中挑两件。
From these shirts, please choose two.

Wǒ xiǎng tiāo yì zhāng zuì hǎo de huà.
我想挑一张最好的画。
I want to select the best painting.

gǔ
骨 n. bone

gǔjié
骨节 *joint*

gǔjià
骨架 *framework*

gúgé
骨骼 *skeleton*

gǔzhé
骨折 *fracture*

chī yādàn
吃鸭蛋

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。

yā
鸭 n. duck

dàn
蛋 n. egg

gōngyā

公鸭 *drake*

mǔyā

母鸭 *duck*

kǎoyā

烤鸭 *roasted duck*

yěyā

野鸭 *wild duck*

xiǎoyā

小鸭 *duckling*

yāròu

鸭肉 *duck lit: duck meat*

yātāng

鸭汤 *duck soup*

yāzhǎng

鸭掌 *duck feet*

yāshémào

鸭舌帽 *cap*

yāzuǐshòu

鸭嘴兽 *platypus*

jīdàn

鸡蛋 *chicken egg*

édàn

鹅蛋 *goose egg*

niǎodàn

鸟蛋 *bird egg*

dànhuáng

蛋黄 *egg yolk*

dànbái / dānqīng

蛋白 / 蛋清 *egg white*

dànké

蛋壳 *egg shells*

dàngāo

蛋糕 *cake*

jiāndàn

煎蛋 *scrambled eggs*

shuǐzhǔdàn

水煮蛋 *boiled eggs*

dàntāng

蛋汤 *egg soup*

diū sān lā sì
丢三落四

Lose 3 Forget 4
“Forgetful”

Example: Nǐ zǒngshì diū sān là sì.
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 fèizhǐ 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.

Wǒ bǎ zāng yīfu diū jìn yīwù lán.
我把脏衣服丢进衣物篮。
I threw the dirty clothes into the hamper.

là
落 v. forget; leave a 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 le yí gè xīngqī de kè.
他落了一个星期的课。
He is a whole week behind with his lessons.

màiméng
卖萌

Selling Cuteness

“Act Cute On Purpose”

Example: Nǐ zài màiméng.
你在卖萌。

mài
卖 + _____ v.

shuǎimài
甩卖 *sale on clearance*

chūmài
出卖 *betray/sell out*

jiàomài
叫卖 *sell on the street*

méng
萌 n. cute

Nà gè xiǎonǚhái hěn méng.

那个小女孩很萌。
The little girl is very cute.

Tā de māo hěn méng.

他的猫很萌。
His cat is very cute.

Hello Kitty hěn méng.

Hello Kitty 很萌。
Hello Kitty is very cute.

_____ + mài n.

shuǎimài
甩卖 *clearance sale*

wàimài
外卖 *take out order*

mài
卖 + _____ n.

màichǎng
卖场 *market*

màixiàng
卖相 *outward appearance*

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”.

Learn a Chinese Phrase

rémén
热门

Hot Door
“Popular”

Example: Jīnróng hěn rèmén.
金融很热门。

rè
热 adj. hot (temperature)

rèyóu
热狗
hotdog
rèshuǐ
热水
hot water
rètāng
热汤
hot soup

Jīntiān hěn rè.
今天天气很热。
It's very hot today.

rè
热 adj. warm-hearted;
affectionate; kind

rèqíng
热情
lit: warm feeling
enthusiasm;
enthusiastic

rènao
热闹
lively/bustling
lit: warm and noisy

rèxīn
热心
warm-hearted

mén
门 n. door; gate

ménkǒu
门口 *entrance; doorway*

ménwèi
门卫 *doorman/entrance guard*

ménlíng
门铃 *doorbell*

ményá
门牙 *front teeth*

zhèngmén
正门 *main entrance*

qiánmén
前门 *front door*

hòumén
后门 *back door*

xiàomén
校门 *school gate*

lángtūn hǔyàn
狼吞虎咽

Wolf Swallow Tiger Gulp

“Wolf Down”

Example: Wǒ lángtūn hǔyàn de chīfàn.
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 shíhòu yàn le yì kǒu 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.

huāpíng
花瓶

Flower Vase

“Pretty But Empty”

Example: Jessica shì ge huāpíng.
Jessica 是个花瓶。

píng
瓶 n. bottle; jar; cruet / vase

jiǔpíng 酒瓶	wine bottle	pínggài 瓶盖	cap; jar lid lit: bottle cap
huāpíng 花瓶	vase	píngsāi 瓶塞	cork lit: bottle cork
sùliào píng 塑料瓶	plastic bottle	píngjǐn 瓶颈	bottle neck
bōli píng 玻璃瓶	glass bottle	kāipíngqì 开瓶器	corkscrew; bottle opener

píng
瓶 measure word

yì píng kělè 一瓶可乐	a bottle of cola
wǔ píng hóngjiǔ 五瓶红酒	five bottles of wine
liǎng píng suānnǎi 两瓶酸奶	two jars/bottles of yogurt
sān píng guǒjiàng 三瓶果酱	three jars of jam

Learn a Chinese Phrase

qī shàng bā xià
七上八下

7 Up 8 Down
“At Sixes and Sevens”
(An Unsettled State of Mind)

Example: Wǒ xīn lǐ qī shàng bā xià de.
我心里七上八下的。

shàng
上 n. directional noun

shàng miàn
上面
above

shàng pù
上铺
upper bunk on a
train or ship

shàng bàn shēn
上半身
the upper body

shàng
上 adj. first (part);
preceding; previ-
ous

shàng cì
上次
last time

shàng zhōu
上周
last week

shàng bàn nián
上半年
first half of a year

shàng
上 v. begin work or
study at a fixed time

shàngkè
上课
go to / begin class

shàngxué
上学
go to school

shàngbān
上班
go to work

xià
下 n. directional noun

lóu xià
楼下
downstairs

shù xià
树下
under the tree

xià zuǐchún
下嘴唇
lower lip

xià
下 adj. next; latter

xià ge yuè
下个月
next month

xià xīngqī
下星期
next week

xià xuéqī
下学期
next semester

xià
下 v. finish; leave off; get off

xiàkè
下课
leave/finish class

xià chē
下车
get out of the car

xiàbān
下班
leave/finish work

èzuòjù
恶作剧

Wickedly Created Drama

“Playing a Prank”

Example: Alice gǎo èzuòjù.
Alice 搞恶作剧。

è
恶 adj. evil; wicked; bad

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*

jù
剧 n. drama

xǐjù
喜剧 *comedy lit: happy drama*

bēijù
悲剧 *tragedy lit: sad drama*

jùběn
剧本 *script lit: drama script*

jùyuàn
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*

gǎo
搞 v. + adj. to do; to make

gǎo gānjìng
搞干净 *to make clean*

gǎo zāng
搞脏 *to make dirty*

gǎo xiào
搞笑 *provoke laughter*

gǎo luàn
搞乱 *to make a mess*

Learn a Chinese Phrase

huài dào gǔtǒu lǐ
坏到骨头里

Bad to the Bone

“Bad to the Bone”

Example: Nǐ huài dào gǔtǒu lǐ le.
你坏到骨头里了。

huài
坏 **adj.** bad; evil; wicked

huàirén
坏人 *bad or wicked person*

jǐ gè huàirén
几个坏人 *several bad people*

huàidàn
坏蛋 *bad person lit: bad egg*

jǐ gè huàidàn
几个坏蛋 *several bad people*

huàishì
坏事 *bad thing/evil deed*

jǐ jiàn huàishì
几件坏事 *several bad things*

huàihuà
坏话 *malicious remarks*

jǐ jù huàihuà
几句坏话 *a few malicious remarks*

huài
坏 **v.** go bad; break down

Niú nǎi huài le.
牛奶坏了。 *The milk went bad.*

Zì xíng chē huài le.
自行车坏了。 *The bike broke down.*

Wán jù shuāi huài le.
玩具摔坏了。 *The toy dropped and broke.*

gǔ
骨 **n.** bones

gǔ ròu
骨肉 *flesh and blood*

pái gǔ
排骨 *spareribs*

gǔ gǎn
骨感 *boney*

guīmì tiě gēmen
 闺蜜/铁哥们

Girl Honey/Iron Brother

“Best Friend Forever” / “Best Buddy”

Example: Teresa shì wǒ de guīmì.
 Teresa 是我的闺蜜。

guī
 闺 n. girl's chamber

Nín de mǔqīn de guīmíng shì shénme?
 您的母亲的闺名是什么?
What's your mother's maiden name?

Tā guīnǚ hěn piàoliàng.
 他闺女很漂亮。
His daughter (northern China) is very beautiful.

tiě
 铁 n. iron

tiěguō
 铁锅 iron wok

cítiě
 磁铁 magnet

tiěsī
 铁丝 iron wire

tiělù
 铁路 railway

tiěkuàng
 铁矿 iron mine

mì
 蜜 n. honey

fēngmì
 蜂蜜 honey

mìfēng
 蜜蜂 bee

mìyuè
 蜜月 honeymoon

mìjiǔ
 蜜酒 mead; mulse

shuǐmìtáo
 水蜜桃 juicy and honey peach

tián yán mì yǔ
 甜言蜜语 sweet words
lit: sweet words
 honey talk

diàowèikǒu
吊胃口

Hanginɡ Someone's Appetite

"Leave Someone Hanging"

Example: Bié diào wǒ de wèikǒu.
别吊我的胃口。

diào
吊 v. to hang adj. hanging

diàochē

吊车

crane lit: hanging vehicle

diàochuáng

吊床

hammock lit: hanging bed

diàodēng

吊灯

chandelier lit: hanging light

diàodài

吊带

spaghetti straps lit: hanging straps

diàoqiáo

吊桥

suspension bridge lit: hanging bridge

diàoshàn

吊扇

ceiling fan lit: hanging fan

wèikǒu
胃口 n. appetite

wèikǒu hǎo

胃口好

good appetite

Wǒ jīntiān wèikǒu hǎo.

我今天胃口好。

Today I have a good appetite.

méiyǒu wèikǒu

没有胃口

to have no appetite

Jīntiān tā méiyǒu wèikǒu.

今天他没有胃口。

Today he has no appetite.

dǎo wèikǒu

倒胃口

to spoil or ruin one's appetite

Chī tài duō qiǎokèlì dǎo wèikǒu.

吃太多巧克力倒胃口。

Eating too much chocolate spoils one's appetite.

duì wèikǒu

对胃口

to suit one's taste

lit: to suit one's appetite

Sìchuān cài duì wǒ de wèikǒu.

四川菜对我的胃口。

Sichuan food suits my taste (lit: appetite).

zhè ge yīnyuè duì wǒ de wèikǒu.

这个音乐对我的胃口。

Learn a Chinese Phrase

fā shāo yǒu
发烧友

Feverish Friend

“Enthusiastic fan”

Example: Melinda shì Hello Kitty fā shāo yǒu.
Melinda是Hello Kitty发烧友。

fā
发 v. to feel a certain physical sensation

fā rè
发热 *have a fever or to feel warm*

fā lěng
发冷 *to feel cold*

fā má
发麻 *to feel numb; tingle*

fā yǎng
发痒 *to feel itchy*

fā
发 v. to send out; deliver; distribute

fā duǎnxìn
发短信 *send a message*

fā huò
发货 *deliver goods*

fā gōngzī
发工资 *to distribute paychecks*

fā zhuàngtài
发状态 *post a message on social media*

shāo
烧 n. fever

gāoshāo
高烧 *high fever*

dīshāo
低烧 *slight fever*

tuìshāo
退烧 *bring down one's fever*

shāo
烧 v. to cook; heat; roast

shāo shuǐ
烧水 *boil water*

shāo fàn
烧饭 *cook a meal*

shāojī
烧鸡 *roasted chicken; roast a chicken*

fēn shǒu
分手

Separat Hands

“Break up”

Example: Wǒ men fēn shǒu le.
我们分手了。

fēn
分 v. to divide; separate; part

fēnlèi 分类	<i>classify; classification</i>	fēnzǔ 分组	<i>divide into groups</i>
fēnjū 分居	<i>live separately/apart (for couple)</i>	fēndiàn 分店	<i>branches</i>

shǒu
手 n. hand

wòshǒu 握手	<i>shake hands</i>	shǒucè 手册	<i>handbook</i>
huīshǒu 挥手	<i>wave one's hand</i>	shǒuzhǎng 手掌	<i>palm</i>
qiānshǒu 牵手	<i>hold hands</i>	shǒuzhǐ 手指	<i>fingers</i>

xiàocǎo/xiàohuā
校草/校花

School Grass / School Flower

“Best looking guy / Best looking girl”

Example: Alice shì xiàohuā.
Alice 是校花。

xiào
校 n. school

gāoxiào

高校 *higher educational institution*

yèxiào

夜校 *night school*

jìxiào

技校 *technical school*

mǔxiào

母校 *alma mater*

xiàochē

校车 *school bus*

xiàofú

校服 *school uniform*

xiàoyuán

校园 *campus*

xiàozhǎng

校长 *principal; headmaster;
president of a school*

cǎo
草 n. grass

qīngcǎo

青草 *green grass*

zácǎo

杂草 *wild grass*

cǎoyuán

草原 *prairie lit: grass land*

cǎodì

草地 *lawn lit: grassplot*

huā
花 n. flower

méiguīhuā

玫瑰花 *rose*

bǎihéhuā

百合花 *lily*

huāpén

花盆 *flower pot*

huābù

花布 *printed fabric*

fēngyún rénwù
风云人物

Wind Cloud Person

“Mover or Shaker”

Example: Patrick shì ge fēngyún rénwù.
Patrick 是个风云人物。

rén
人 n. man; person; people

rén
人 n. people with certain occupation

réncái
人才 *talents*

rénkǒu
人口 *population*

réngōng
人工 *labor*

lièrén
猎人 *hunter*

gōngrén
工人 *worker*

fāyánrén
发言人 *spokesperson*

wù
物 n. thing; matter; material

wù
物 n. creature

dúwù
读物 *reading material*

chǎnwù
产物 *product; outcome*

bǎowù
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)*

bāguà
八卦

Eight Symbols

“Gossip/Gossips/Gossipy”

Example: Alice bāguà měi gè péngyǒu.
Alice 八卦每个朋友。

bāguà
八卦 v. to gossip

Tā xǐhuān bāguà biérén.
他喜欢八卦别人。
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.

bāguà
八卦 adj. gossipy

Lisa hěn bāguà.
Lisa很八卦。
Lisa is very gossipy.

Wǒ bù xǐhuān bāguà méitǐ.
我不喜欢八卦媒体。
I don't like gossipy media.

wúliáo
无聊

Without Sustenance

“Boring/Bored”

Example: Zhè ge huàtí hěn wúliáo.
这个话题很无聊。

wú

无 v. not have; be without

Tā hěn wúzhī.

他很无知。

He is very ignorant.

Lit: without knowledge.

Tā de hùzhào wúxiào.

他的护照无效。

His passport is invalid.

Lit: without validation

wúzhī

无知

without knowledge

wúxiàn

无限

without limit

wúyòng

无用

without use/useless

wúxiào

无效

without validity; invalidation

wúmíng

无名

without name; anonymous

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

Tāmen zài liáotiān.

他们在聊天。

They are chatting.

Tāmen shì wǎngliáo rènshi de.

他们是网聊认识的。

They met each other through online chatting.

Niánqīngrén xǐhuān qúnliáo.

年轻人喜欢（上网）群聊。

Young people like (online) group chatting.

yún lǐ wù lǐ
云里雾里

Inside Cloud Inside Fog

“In a Fog”

Example: Wǒ tīng de yún lǐ wù lǐ de.
我听得云里雾里的。

yún
云 n. cloud

báiyún
白云 *white cloud*

wūyún
乌云 *dark cloud; black cloud*

yún jìsuàn
云计算 *cloud computing*
(lit. cloud calculating)

mógu yún
蘑菇云 *mushroom cloud*

duōyún
多云 adj. cloudy lit: many cloud

duō yún yǒu yǔ
多云有雨 *cloudy and raining*

duō yún de tiānqì
多云的天气 *cloudy sky*

qíng zhuǎn duō yún
晴转多云 *sunny turning to cloudy*

duō yún zhuǎn qíng
多云转晴 *cloudy to sunny*

wù
雾 n. fog

wùqì
雾气 *mist*

wùmái
雾霾 *smog lit: fog smog*

wùdēng
雾灯 *fog light*

pēn wù qì
喷雾器 *atomizer; sprayer*

lǐ
里 prep. in; inside

jiā lǐ
家里 *in the house*

chē lǐ
车里 *in the car*

xuéxiào lǐ
学校里 *in the school*

jiàoshì lǐ
教室里 *in the classroom*

bāngdàománg
帮倒忙

Opposite Help
“Be more hindrance than help”

Example: Nǐ zài bāngdàománg.
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 dào yǐng 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 bù máng.

我周末不忙。

I am not busy this weekend.

xiǎoqìguǐ
小气鬼

Little Air Ghost

“Cheapskate”

Example: Kyle shì ge xiǎo qì guǐ.
Kyle 是个小气鬼。

qì
气 n. air ; weather; gas

dǎ qì
打气 *blow up; inflate*

tòuqì
透气 *take in fresh
air; let air in*

qìqiú
气球 *balloon*

tiān qì
天气 *weather*

qì hòu
气候 *climate*

qì wēn
气温 *temperature*

tiānránqì
天然气 *natural gas*

méiqì
煤气 *coal gas*

yǎngqì
氧气 *oxygen*

guǐ
鬼 n. ghost; bad habit/behavior

guǐjié
鬼节 *Ghost Festival*

guǐhún
鬼魂 *ghost spirit*

guǐchéng
鬼城 *ghost city*

jiǔguǐ
酒鬼 *heavy drinker*

lìnsèguǐ
吝啬鬼 *mean person; miser*

tǎoyànguǐ
讨厌鬼 *detestable person*

yānguǐ
烟鬼 *heavy smoker*

bàdào
霸道

Kingly Way
"Bossy"

Example: Lǎobǎn zhēn bàdào.
老板真霸道。

bà
霸 n. king; tyrant; despot

bà
霸 + v = v

bàwáng
霸王 king; tyrant; despot

bàzhàn
霸占 forcibly occupy; seize;

bàquán
霸权 supremacy; lit: "king power"

chēngbà
称霸 dominate; tyrannize

bàzhǔ
霸主 overlord; feudal-lord; leader
in a given field

dào
道 n. physical road/path;

dào
道 n. art; technique; skill

jiēdào
街道 street

chádào
茶道 tea ceremony;

rénxíng dào
人行道 pedestrian road
Lit: "people walk road"

huādào
花道 (art of) flower arrangement

wāndào
弯道 curve (in a road)
lit: "curved road"

méndào
门道 way; means; method

