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A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!



Lesson 1: Thank You! in Cantonese

唔該

LESSON NOTES

In the Cantonese language, 唔該 (m4 goi1) has a few meanings. We most commonly use this to mean "Thanks" in a casual way. We can also use it to mean "please," and it can even be used to get someone's attention. 唔該 literally translates as "no" (唔) and "should" (該). You put these together and it means something along the lines of "shouldn't." 唔該 is made up of two sounds, one for each character. The first sound is m4, pronounced with your mouth closed almost like humming, low and flat. The second sound is goi1 with a flat high tone, almost like singing. We can also use 唔該 when we want to gain someone's attention in a polite way, especially in a restaurant setting when needing to get a waiter's attention.

唔該晒 (m4 goi1 saai3) is a more emphatic way of saying "Thank you."

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Jyutping	English
唔該晒	m4 goi1 saai3	Thank you very much.
多謝	do1 ze6	Thank you. (formal)
多謝晒	do1 ze6 saai3	Thank you very much. (formal)

VOCABULARY

Chinese Character	Jyutping	English
唔該	m4 goi1	please; thank you; excuse me

QUICK TIP

Native Hong Kongers commonly use handshakes when greeting Westerners. The Hong Kong Chinese handshake is rather light, so don't try to squeeze with all your might. During the greeting, many Hong Kong Chinese lower their eyes as a sign of respect, but you do not have to reciprocate.