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A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!



Lesson 3: Getting What You Want Using Vietnamese

Xin.

LESSON NOTES

This lesson's phrase will help you take matters into your own hands! In this lesson we'll take a look at the word "please," which will be very important when you need to ask for something.

In Vietnamese, "please" is xin

Xin is the flat tone

But please note that the word xin is not usually used alone with the thing you want. As xin has another meaning, it can be mistaken that you want that thing for free. You need to add cho tôi after xin (meaning "give me") then add the thing you want at the end.

For example:

You point at something and you want to say "this, please." In Vietnamese, it is:

Xin cho tôi cái này.

(Literally, please give me this)

cái này means "this." cái is the rising tone and này falls gradually

When you want to refer to something a little farther, you say: cái đó, which means "that." Cái and đó are said in the rising tone

Let's hear them in their phrases again:

xin cho tôi cái này.

xin cho tôi cái đó.

Please remember that in Vietnam it is a little rude to point at people. But pointing at things, especially when you are trying to buy something at the market, or when it helps to illustrate your point, is perfectly okay. Just make sure you say Cảm ơn. ("Thank you") when the object is handed to you.

A more formal phrase for "please" is làm ơn. The word làm falls gradually and the word ơn is the flat tone.

It can be used exactly the same as xin. Just put it at the beginning of the sentence instead of xin, keeping the rest unchanged.

Although using the alternative xin may be easier to pronounce, it is just as effective.

PHRASES

Vietnamese	English
Xin mở cái cửa này ra.	Please open this door.
Xin (hãy) đưa cho tôi quyển sách đó.	Please give me that book.
Làm ơn đưa cho tôi cái bút đó.	Please give me that pen.
Đừng chạm vào cái này.	Don't touch this.
Cái bánh này ngon.	This cake is delicious.
Cái bút này là của Lan.	This is Lan's pen.

VOCABULARY

Vietnamese	English
xin	to ask (for), please
cái đó	that
cái này	this

QUICK TIP

The word xin can be used as a function-word at the beginning of most phrases to further express respect. For example, the phrase for "thank you" is cảm ơn can be said as xin cảm ơn. The meaning of the phrase does not change but adding xin suggests added respect.