



Lesson 3: Please.

Xin.

LESSON NOTES

Vietnamese society places heavy emphasis on respect and it is heavily reflected in the language. The word “xin” in Vietnamese is the English equivalent of “please.” However, the literal meaning of the word “xin” is “to beg.” Considering this, it is a very useful phrase to help convey respect. The most rudimentary way of using this phrase is pointing at something while saying this phrase, but the following will build upon this.

To say “this please” in Vietnamese is “xin cái này.” The word “xin” is the flat tone, “cái” is the rising tone and “này” falls gradually. A closer look at this expression shows the word order. In English, “this,” comes before “please” but in Vietnamese it is the opposite. The word “this” follows “please” yielding “xin cái này.”

The word for “that” in Vietnamese is “cái đó.” Notice the similarity between the words for “this” and “that.” Both words have the phrase “cái.” The word “đó” is said in the rising tone and is spelled with the “Đ” consonant. The “Đ” sound is similar to the “D” sound in the English for “down.”

Hence, if you're at the market and there is something you want that is near you, use “xin cái này.” For something further away use “xin cái đó.”

PHRASES

Vietnamese	English
Xin.	Please.
Xin cái này.	This please.
Xin cái đó.	That please.
Xin làm ơn.	Please. (formal)

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 “cam ơn” can be said as “xin cảm ơn.” The meaning of the phrase does not change but adding “xin” suggests added respect.

QUICK TIP 2

A more formal way to say “please” is “làm ơn.” The word “làm” falls gradually and the word “ơn” is the flat tone. The vowel “Ơ” sound may be difficult for those new to the language. Although using the alternative “xin” maybe easier to pronounce, it is just as effective.