

# HKGong Cantonese Starter Reference

A cleaner English rebuild of the original Cantonese character/vocabulary sheet: core words, Jyutping, meanings, usage notes, particles, measure words, and home vocabulary.

How to read the tables	Why it matters
Word = Cantonese characters. Jyutping = pronunciation. English = practical meaning. Use / note = spoken, written, formal, or pattern guidance.	Cantonese is easier when you learn the sound, the written form, and the sentence job together instead of memorizing isolated translations.
<b>Spoken</b>	Natural in conversation. These are often the forms you hear in Hong Kong daily speech.
<b>Written</b>	More formal or closer to standard written Chinese. Useful for reading, signs, subtitles, and formal text.

**A first sentence to keep in mind**

你好，我想學廣東話。

nei5 hou2, ngo5 soeng2 hok6 gwong2 dung1 waa2.

Hello, I want to learn Cantonese. Notice the pattern: greeting + I + want + learn + Cantonese. This reference is designed to help you see those parts clearly.

# Time Words

Use these to place a sentence in time. Spoken forms are often more natural in daily Hong Kong Cantonese.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
尋日	cam4 jat6	yesterday	Spoken
昨天	zok3 tin1	yesterday	Written / formal
今日	gam1 jat6	today	
聽日	ting1 jat6	tomorrow	Spoken
後日	hau6 jat6	the day after tomorrow	
琴晚	kam4 maan5	last night	Spoken
早啲	zou2 di1	earlier	
之前	zi1 cin4	before	
而家	ji4 gaa1	now	Spoken
之後	zi1 hau6	after / later	
稍後	saau2 hau6	later	Written / formal
遲啲	ci4 di1	later	Spoken
下次	haa6 ci3	next time	
上次	soeng6 ci3	last time	
今次	gam1 ci3	this time	
然後	jin4 hau6	then / afterwards	Written
星期	sing1 kei4	week	
一日	jat1 jat6	one day	
早上	zou2 soeng5	morning	Written
中午	zung1 ng5	noon	
下晝	haa6 zau3	afternoon	Spoken
黃昏	wong4 fan1	dusk / evening	
晚上	maan5 soeng5	evening / night	Written
嗰陣	go2 zan6	at that time / back then	Spoken

# People, Demonstratives, Places

These are the building blocks for saying who, what, and where.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
我	ngo5	I / me	
你	nei5	you	
佢	keoi5	he / she / they	Singular in basic use
哋	dei6	plural marker	我哋 = we
位	wai6	person; polite classifier	
自己	zi6 gei2	oneself	
呢個	ni1 go3	this one	
嗰個	go2 go3	that one	
呢啲	ni1 di1	these	
嗰啲	go2 di1	those	
呢度	ni1 dou6	here	
嗰度	go2 dou6	there	
餐廳	caan1 teng1	restaurant	
學校	hok6 haau6	school	
街	gaai1	street	
路	lou6	road	
市場	si5 coeng4	market	Written; 街市 is common in speech
公司	gung1 si1	company / office	
酒店	zau2 dim3	hotel	
醫院	ji1 jyun2	hospital	
藥房	joek6 fong2	pharmacy	
洗手間	sai2 sau2 gaan1	restroom / toilet	
商店	soeng1 dim3	shop / store	Written

## Negation, To Be, Possession

These small words appear everywhere. Learn them early and sentences become much easier to parse.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
唔	m4	not	Main spoken negator
係	hai6	to be	Identity: 我係...
嘅	ge3	possessive / descriptive particle	我嘅 = my
有	jau5	have / there is	
冇	mou5	not have / there is not	
有去過	jau5 heoi3 gwo3	have been to / have gone before	Experience pattern

## Modal Words and Helpers

These words tell you about ability, desire, obligation, possibility, and future meaning.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
識	sik1	know how to / have the ability to	
想	soeng2	want / would like / think	
鍾意	zung1 ji3	like	Spoken
喜歡	hei2 fun1	like	Written
想要	soeng2 jiu3	want to have / really want	
必須	bit1 seoi1	must	Formal
要	jiu3	want / need / have to	
應該	jing1 goi1	should	
會	wui5	will / can / likely to	
將會	zoeng1 wui5	will / going to	Written
可以	ho2 ji5	can / may	
可能	ho2 nang4	maybe / possible	
或者	waak6 ze2	or / perhaps	

# Adverbs and Connectors

These words change the rhythm of a sentence: frequency, amount, sequence, and contrast.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
常常	soeng4 soeng4	often	
有時	jau5 si4	sometimes	
從來都	cung4 loi4 dou1	always / ever / never	Meaning depends on context and negation
成日	seng4 jat6	all the time	Spoken
經常	ging1 soeng4	frequently	
以前	ji5 cin4	before / used to	
好多	hou2 do1	a lot / many	
一啲	jat1 di1	a little / some	
時時	si4 si4	always / often	
好少	hou2 siu2	rarely / very little	
咁	gam3	so / that much	
仲	zung6	still / also	
已經	ji5 ging1	already	
再	zoi3	again	
多次	do1 ci3	many times	
夠	gau3	enough	
都	dou1	all / also / even	
就	zau6	then / just / precisely	
只有	zi2 jau5	only have / there is only	
另外	ling6 ngoi6	in addition / another	
反對	faan2 deoi3	oppose / be against	
如果	jyu4 gwo2	if	
但係	daan6 hai6	but	Spoken
所以	so2 ji5	so / therefore	

# Core Verbs

The old sheet had many excellent starter verbs. This version keeps them together with clearer English.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
行	haang4	walk	
去	heoi3	go	
回	wui4	return	Written
食	sik6	eat	
飲	jam2	drink	
加	gaa1	add	
聞	man4	smell	
賣	maai6	sell	
買	maai5	buy	
笑	siu3	laugh	
哭	huk1	cry	Written
喊	haam3	cry	Spoken
用	jung6	use	
做	zou6	do / make	
見	gin3	see / meet	
讀	duk6	read / study	
寫	se2	write	
知	zi1	know	
講	gong2	speak / say	
傾	king1	chat	Spoken
搭	daap3	take / ride	Transport
嚟	lei4	come	Spoken
打	daa2	hit / call / play	Meaning depends on object
坐	co5	sit / ride	
站	zaam6	stand	Written
搵	wan2	look for / find	Spoken

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
找	zaau2	find / look for	Written; also settle a bill/change in some contexts
住	zyu6	live / stay	
試	si3	try	
玩	waan2	play	
記	gei3	remember	
拉	laai1	pull	
推	teoi1	push	
睇	tai2	watch / see / read	Spoken
聽	teng1	listen / hear	
收	sau1	receive / accept	
比	bei2	compare / than	
畀	bei2	give / to	Common Cantonese character
俾	bei2	give / allow	Variant form
入	jap6	enter	
離開	lei4 hoi1	leave	
關	gwaan1	close	
開	hoi1	open / turn on	
明白	ming4 baak6	understand	
停	ting4	stop	
學	hok6	learn	
錫	sek3	kiss / cherish	Spoken
熄	sik1	turn off / extinguish	

# Home and Everyday Nouns

A practical set for describing rooms, furniture, and things around the home.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
啲嘢	di1 je5	things / something	Spoken
嘢	je5	stuff / thing	Spoken
房間	fong4 gaan1	room	
桌子	coek3 zi2	table	Written; 枱 toi2 is common in speech
椅子	ji2 zi2	chair	
公寓	gung1 jyu6	apartment	Written
廚房	cyu4 fong2	kitchen	
客廳	haak3 teng1	living room	
睡房	seoi6 fong2	bedroom	
臥室	ngo6 sat1	bedroom	Written
陽台	joeng4 toi4	balcony	
浴室	juk6 sat1	bathroom	
門	mun4	door	
窗	coeng1	window	
梳化	so1 faa3	sofa	Loanword
冰箱	bing1 soeng1	refrigerator	Written; 雪櫃 syut3 gwai6 is common
爐頭	lou4 tau4	stove	
微波爐	mei4 bo1 lou4	microwave	
洗衣機	sai2 ji1 gei1	washing machine	
乾衣機	gon1 ji1 gei1	dryer	
書架	syu1 gaa3	bookshelf	
櫃子	gwai6 zi2	cabinet	
風扇	fung1 sin3	fan	
燈	dang1	lamp / light	
空調	hung1 tiu4	air conditioner	Written; 冷氣 laang5 hei3 is common
窗簾	coeng1 lim4	curtain	

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
味	mei6	taste / smell / flavour	

## Measure Words and Quantifiers

Cantonese uses classifiers between numbers and nouns. 個 is common, but specific nouns often prefer specific measure words.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
個	go3	general classifier	Very common
每個	mui5 go3	every	
杯	bui1	cup / glass	
片	pin3	slice / piece	
頂	deng2	for hats / things on the head	
棵	fo1	for plants / trees	
隻	zek3	for animals / one of a pair	
架	gaa3	for vehicles / large machines	
行	hong4	line / row	
打	daa1	dozen	
篇	pin1	article / written piece	
碗	wun2	bowl	
粒	nap1	small round object	
餐	caan1	meal	
份	fan6	portion / copy / document	
啲	di1	some / plural-like amount	Informal and very common
全部	cyun4 bou6	all	
幾個	gei2 go3	a few / several	
少數	siu2 sou3	few / minority	
任何	jam6 ho4	any	
好多	hou2 do1	many / a lot	
各	gok3	each	
無數	mou4 sou3	countless	

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
其他	kei4 taa1	other	
所有	so2 jau5	all / every	
左右	zo2 jau6	about / approximately	

## Question Words

Many Cantonese question words stay in the place where the answer would appear.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
邊個	bin1 go3	who	
邊度	bin1 dou6	where	
點解	dim2 gaai2	why	
幾時	gei2 si4	when	
點	dim2	how	
邊	bin1	which	
幾多	gei2 do1	how many / how much	
做乜	zou6 mat1	why / what are you doing	Colloquial
乜	mat1	what	

## Final Particles and Aspect Markers

Particles carry tone, attitude, completion, and sentence texture. Do not translate them word for word.

Word	Jyutping	English	Use / note
呀	aa3	softens tone / exclamation / choice question	Very common
㗎	aa1 / aa4	soft suggestion / gentle ending	
喇	laa3	change of state / soft request / already	
啦	laa1 / laa3	let's / please / sentence ending	
架	gaa3	assertion / context marker	Often combines with 嘅
㗎	gaa3	assertive ending	嘅 + 架
嘞	laak3	completion / change	
咗	zo2	completed action	Aspect marker
緊	gan2	ongoing action	Aspect marker
過	gwo3	experience before	Aspect marker
住	zyu6	continuing state	Aspect marker

# Mini Sentence Patterns

Use these patterns as simple anchors while you study the vocabulary above.

Pattern	Example	Meaning
Subject + 唔 + Verb	我唔識。 ngo5 m4 sik1.	I do not know how.
Subject + 想 + Verb	我想學。 ngo5 soeng2 hok6.	I want to learn.
Subject + 係 + Noun	佢係老師。 keoi5 hai6 lou5 si1.	She/he is a teacher.
喺 + Place	我喺睡房。 ngo5 hai2 seoi6 fong2.	I am in the bedroom.
Verb + 咗	我食咗。 ngo5 sik6 zo2.	I ate / I have eaten.
Verb + 緊	我學緊。 ngo5 hok6 gan2.	I am learning.
有 + Noun	呢度有餐廳。 ni1 dou6 jau5 caan1 teng1.	There is a restaurant here.
Question word in place	你去邊度？ nei5 heoi3 bin1 dou6?	Where are you going?

## Keep learning with HKGong

Open HKGong and connect the parts: sounds, words, sentence structure, examples, characters, listening, writing, and practice. The goal is not to memorize a sheet. The goal is to make Cantonese feel organized enough to keep going.

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