
Chapter 1. Post Office and Telephone

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Objectives

General

The purpose of the Post Office and Telephone Module (PST/TEL) is to provide you with the linguistic skills you need to mail things, make phone calls and send telegrams.

Specific

When you have finished this module you should be able to:

1. Locate a mailbox. Locate the nearest post office.
2. Buy postage for an air mail letter, a registered letter, aerogram, regular letter or postcard.
3. Buy letter paper, envelopes, aerograms and postcards.
4. Ship packages by sea or by air.
5. Insure packages or letters you send.
6. Locate a telegraph office.
7. Send a telegram.
8. Find the nearest public telephone.
9. Ask for help in using a phone? directory.
10. Make a phone call, ask to speak with someone. Understand simple replies such as "that line is busy", "he is not here now" or "he will call you back".
11. Answer the phone and understand who the caller wishes to speak with. Tell the caller you will look for that person. Tell him whether the person he wishes to speak with is there, is busy, or not there.
12. Ask someone to speak louder or tell him you cannot hear him clearly.

Unit 1

Part 1

Reference List

Notes after Part 1

yìfēng xìn: -fēng is the counter for letters and other things with envelopes.

-céng: Counter for Floors of buildings.

guàhào xìn: Guàhào is the verb “to register”. It is used here as a modifier. It precedes the noun it modifies.

Peking:

On his way out to mail some things, an American asks the service attendant for the Floor of his hotel for some information.

Part 2

Reference List

Notes after Part 2

tiē: This is the verb “to stick something on or to something else”.

Běnnshìde píngxìn/wàidide píngxìn: In the PRC mail rates differ depending on whether something is going to someplace in the city, out of the city, or out of the country. For the last two categories air mail service is available.

běnnshì: “This city”.

wàidi: “Foreign place”, “outside this city”.

Peking:

A conversation at the Post Office.

Notes after dialogue in part 2

shízhāng yóupiào, wǔgē hángkōng yóujiǎn: Notice how both the counter -zhāng and the counter -gē are used here to talk about Flat objects. Although the counter -zhāng would be correct for both nouns, the speaker feels free to use -gē also.

Part 3

Reference List

Notes after Part 3

tì: This is the prepositional verb meaning “in place of, for”.

Mèimei tì wo qù mǎi cài.

Little sister is going to go buy food for me (instead of me).

shàngtōu: -Tóu is a syllable like **-biar**. When added to a direction word, it changes it into a place name. The syllable **-tóu**, however, cannot be added to as many different direction words as **-biar** can. (See also final reference notes Directions Unit Five.)

Xiǎomàibù zài fàndiàn lǐtōu.

The variety shop is in the hotel.

Fàndiàn wàitōu yǒu yige yóutǒng.

Outside the hotel is a mailbox.

xiǎoxīn: “To be careful”.

qīngfàng: “Fragile”, or more literally “to put lightly”.

zuihǎo: This word acts as an adverb, coming after the subject **nǐ** and before the verb phrase. The word **zuihǎo** is used in politely offering advice to someone, not in warning them what they'd better do.

Taipei:

A conversation at the Post Office.

Part 4

Reference List

Notes after Part 4

bǎ dìzhí: In sentence No. 28 the object comes before the verb and is preceded by the marker **bǎ**. Although it is common for an object to come before the verb marked by **bǎ**, not all objects can do so. The object in a **bǎ**-phrase is the direct object of an action verb. It is a particular know thing, not a new idea about to be introduced into the conversation. The action verb in the sentence is usually more than one syllable or followed by something else, such as a place name. For more on **bǎ**, see Transportation Unit 3 and Meeting Unit 5.

Qǐng nǐ bǎ shū fàngzài zhuōzishang.

Please put the book on the table.

Tā bǎ tāde chē mài le.

He sold his car.

diànxìnjú: “Telegraph Office.” In the PRC the word used is **diànxùnjú**.

Taipei:

Mr. White, an American, is talking to a Chinese friend.

(Now he speaks to the clerk at the Telegraph Office.)

(He writes down what he wants to say and hands it to the clerk.)

Peking:

An American staying at the Peking Hotel asks the service attendant on her Floor for some information.

Unit Vocabulary List

bǎ	把	object marker
bāoguǒ	包裹	package
bǎoxiǎn	保险	to protect by insurance, to insure
běnnhì	本市	this city
-céng	-层	counter for Floors of buildings
dǎ diànhuà	打电话	to make a phone call, to telephone
diànbào	电报	telegram
Diànbào Dàlóu	电报大楼	Telegraph Office
diànhuà	电话	phone call
Diànxìnjú	电信局	Telegraph Office
-fēng	-封	counter for letter
fúwùtái	服务台	service desk
guàhào	挂号	to register(something)
guàhàoxìn (yīfēng)	挂号信 (一封)	registered letter
guówài	国外	outside the country, foreign
guónèi	国内	within the country, domestic
hǎiyùn	海运	sea mail
hángkōng	航空	air mail
hángkōng yóujiǎn	航空邮件	aerogram
-jiàn	-件	counter for matter, affairs
jiǎnchá	检查	to inspect examine
jì	寄	to mail, to send by mail
lóuxià	楼下	downstairs
míngxìnpìàn	明信片	post cards

píngxìn	平信	regular mail, surface mail
qīngfàng	轻放	fragile(lit, put down lightly)
shì(yíjiàn)	事(一件)	matter, affair, thing
tì	替	in place of (someone), for
tiē	贴	to paste on, to stick
wàidì	外地	outside the local area
wàimian	外面	outside
xiāngzi	箱子	box, suitcase, trunk
xiǎoxīn	小心	to be careful
xiěshàng	写上	to write on (something)
xìn (yīfēng)	信 (一封)	letter
xìnfēng	信封	envelope
xìnzhǐ	信纸	stationery
yìqǐ	一起	together, together with
yóujú	邮局	post office
yóupiào(yìzhāng)	邮票	stamp
yǒu tǒng	邮筒	mailbox
post office	邮政局	yóuzhèngjú
zhòngyào	重要	to be important
zuìhǎo	最好	the best; “it would be best”
zuìshǎo	最少	at least, at the minimum

Unit 2

Part 1

Reference List

Notes after Part 1

néng: “to be able to”. Although this verb overlaps in meaning with **kéyì**, “can, may”, there are definite differences. The verb **néng** is more general, while **kéyì** has the narrower meaning “be able to” the sense of “be permitted to do so by someone”.

Peking:

Part 2

Reference List

Notes after part 2

Qǐng dà yìdiǎr shēng shuō: Notice that the phrase describing the manner of action, **dà yìdiǎr shēng** (with a little bit louder voice), comes before the main verb **shuō**, “to speak”.

qīngchū: This is the adjectival verb “to be clear”.

Peking:

(The receptionist puts the call through.)

(He speaks a little louder.)

Part 3

Reference List

Notes after part 3

... **zhànzhe xiàn ne**: -Zhe is the marker of DURATION of actions and states. It indicates that an action or state lasted (or lasts) for an amount of time. The marker ne marks ONGOING actions and states. In this expression the marker -zhe tells us that at some time the line CONTINUES to be occupied, and the marker ne tells us that this is GOING ON now. -Zhe is used in sentences to describe activities which last over a period of time, whether that time is past, present or future. A verb plus -zhe in Chinese often corresponds to the “-ing” form of the verb in English.

Zǒuzhe qù kényi ma?

Can you get there by walking?

Tā hái bìngzhe ne.

He is still sick.

tīngdǒng: This is a compound verb meaning “to understand (by listening)”.

guò: This is the verb “to pass, cross, go through.” It can be used when talking about time or space.

Guò liǎngtiáo jiē, wàng zuǒ zǒu.

Go past two streets and go to the left.

Guò liǎngfēn zhōng, wǒ zài lái.

I'll be back in two minutes.

Taipei:

Part 4

Reference List

Reference Notes

Taipei:

(After the young lady finds the number, he dials it. A servant picks up the phone.)

(He hears the servant say...)

Unit Vocabulary List

bàngōngshì	办公室	office
bié	别	don't
bú yòng	不用	no need to
chá	查	to look up (information)
dài	带	to bring with one, to carry along
diànhuàbù	电话簿	phone directory
fēnjī	分机	telephone extension
gōngguǎn	公管	residence, home (a polite reference to another's residence)
gōngyòng	公用	public, for public use
guàshàng	挂上	to hang up (telephone)
guò	过	to pass (some time)
huí diànhuà	回电话	to return a phone call
jiē	接	to connect, to join
jiētōngqu	通过去	to connect, to put through (phone call)
liú ge huà	留个话	to leave a message
Měidàsī	美大司	Bureau of American and Pacific Affairs
míngzi	名字	name
néng	能	can, to be able

qīngchú	清除	to be clear
shāngrén	商人	businessman
shēng	声	sound, voice
tīng	听	to listen to, to hear
tīngdong	听懂	to understand (by listening)
Wàijiāobù	外交部	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Wàimàobù	外贸部	Ministry of Foreign Trade
wàng	忘	to forget
xiàn	线	telephone line, wire
xiéxiàlai	写下来	to write down
yíhuǐr	一会儿	a short while, a moment
zhàn	占	to occupy a space
zhǎo	找	to look for, to find

Module Vocabulary

bàngōngshì	办公室	office
bāoguǒ	包裹	package
bǎoxiǎn	保险	to protect by insurance, to insure
bǎ	把	object marker
bènnhì	本市	this city
bié	别	don't
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chá	查	to look up (information)
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dài	带	to bring with one, to carry along
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fēnjī	分机	telephone extension

fúwùtái	服务台	service desk
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guàhào	挂号	to register(something)
guàshàng	挂上	to hang up(telephone)
guónèi	国内	within the country, domestic
guówài	国外	outside the country, foreign
guò	过	to pass(some time)
hǎiyùn	海运	sea mail
hángkōng yóujiàn	航空邮件	aerogram
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jì	寄	to mail, to send by mail
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lóuxià	楼下	downstairs
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míngxìnpìàn	明信片	post cards
míngzi	名字	name
néng	能	can, to be able
píngxìn	平信	regular mail, surface mail
post office	邮政局	yóuzhèngjú
qīngchú	清除	to be clear
qīngfàng	轻放	fragile(lit, put down lightly)
shāngrén	商人	businessman
shēng	声	sound, voice
shì(yījiàn)	事(一件)	matter, affair, thing
tiē	贴	to paste on, to stick
tīngdǒng	听懂	to understand (by listening)

ting	听	to listen to, to hear
tì	替	in place of (someone), for
wàidì	外地	outside the local area
Wàijiāobù	外交部	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Wàimàobù	外贸部	Ministry of Foreign Trade
wàimian	外面	outside
wàng	忘	to forget
xiāngzi	箱子	box, suitcase, trunk
xiàn	线	telephone line, wire
xiǎoxīn	小心	to be careful
xiěshàng	写上	to write on (something)
xiěxiàlai	写下来	to write down
xìnfēng	信封	envelope
xìn (yīfēng)	信 (一封)	letter
xìnzhǐ	信纸	stationery
yīhuǐr	一会儿	a short while, a moment
yìqǐ	一起	together, together with
yóujú	邮局	post office
yóupiào(yìzhāng)	邮票	stamp
yóu tǒng	邮筒	mailbox
zhàn	占	to occupy a space
zhǎo	找	to look for, to find
zhòngyào	重要	to be important
zuìhǎo	最好	the best; "it would be best"
zuìshǎo	最少	at least, at the minimum