
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, wǔge hángkōng yóujiǎn: Notice how both the counter -zhāng and the counter -ge are used here to talk about Flat objects. Although the counter -zhāng would be correct for both nouns, the speaker feels free to use -ge 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 yóutōng.

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 ni 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 dìzhǐ: 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 known 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 ni bǎ shū fàngzài zhuōzishang.

Please put the book on the table.

Tā bǎ tāde chē mài le.

He sold his car.

diànxinjú: “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

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 lender 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

... **zhàn zhe 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