
Chapter 1. Car

A Modular Approach

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Objectives of the Car Module

General

The purpose of the Car Module is to provide you with the linguistic skills you need to use and take care of your car in everyday situations as well as emergencies.

Before starting the Car Module, you should have at least completed the Transportation Module.

Specific

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

1. Buy gasoline using the metric system to indicate quantity and ration coupons if necessary. Understand if the attendant offers you high-test or regular gas.
2. Tell an attendant that there isn't enough air in the tires. Ask for air to be put in the tires.
3. Tell an attendant the car windows need cleaning.
4. Explain to a garage attendant where your car has developed problems lately: brakes, headlights, automatic transmission, gear shift, fan belt, exhaust pipe, and so on.
5. Ask for a regular maintenance check up for the car.
6. Tell someone you have a flat tire and whether or not you have a spare tire and tools.
7. Tell someone that you got a traffic ticket and why.
8. State whether or not you have your driver's license and car registration with you.
9. Ask in a collision situation if someone is injured.
10. Understand someone describe in simple terms the damage to their car resulting from an accident.
11. Ask a garage repairman to fix a car which has been in an accident. Find out how long it will take to fix it. Ask for an estimate on cost repairs.

Unit 1

Part 1

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on Part 1

qìyóu piào: “Gasoline Coupons”. In the PRC, many commodities, such as cloth, food items, watches, bicycles, must be bought with money and ration coupons.

zú: “to be enough, to be sufficient.” **Lúntāide qì bù zú le**. is translated here as “the air in the tires isn't enough.” A more literal translation might be “The air in the tires isn't enough anymore.” The negative **bù** used with a marker **le** for new situation expresses a negative condition that has recently come about.

bōli: This word literally means “glass”, but is used here to refer to the windows of the car.

man: This is the adjectival verb “to be full”.

Wǒ xiǎng cāyicā: “I think I'll wipe it a bit.” In the PRC gas stations sell gas only. Any minor servicing that may be needed, such as cleaning windows and getting air for tires, may be done by the driver himself. Any major servicing must be done at a repair garage.

Dialogue Peking

Dialogue Taipei

Notes after Dialogues in Part 1

Jiǔ yóu jiā hǎo le. “The oil is added.” In the phrase **jiā hǎo le**, the word **hǎo** is used as the final, element of a compound verb of result. It indicates that the action of the verb has been brought to a successful conclusion. This is discussed in Transportation, Unit 7.

Part 2

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on Part 2

máobing: This word is translated here as “something wrong.” Other translations might be: “defect”, “flaw”, “trouble”, or “problem”.

Tāde diànshì chū máobing le.

His television developed a problem.

A second meaning for **máobing** is “medical problem”, “illness”.

Wǒ shénme máobing yě méiyǒu.

There is nothing wrong with me.

A third meaning is “bad habit”, “odd habit”.

Tā máobing hen dà.

He is very “picky” (odd).

líng: This is the adjectival verb “to be sharp, keen”. It can be used to describe people that are intelligent. It can also be used to describe machinery that works well.

Lǎo Wángde érzi hěn líng.

Lǎo Wáng’s son is sharp.

Zhèige jíqì hái líng bu líng?

Does this machine still work well?

liàng: “To be bright”. A more literal translation of **You yíge dēng bú**

liàng le might be “There is one lamp that does not light up anymore.”

bǎoyǎng: “To maintain”. This verb can be used to talk about taking care of a person's body, as well as maintaining machinery.

Nǐ yíding děi bǎoyǎng zìjǐ.

You have to take care of yourself.

Tā gāng shēngle háizi, dàifu gàosu tā hǎohāorde bǎoyǎng.

After she had just given birth to a child, the doctor told her to take good care of herself.

língjiàn: “spare parts” or simply “parts”. **Huàn língjiàn** is “to exchange (something) for a spare part”.

Dialogue Peking

Dialogue Taipei

Notes after Dialogues in Part 2

Yǒu shíhòu hái huì xihuǒ.: You've seen that the auxiliary verb **huì** can mean “know how to, can”, as in **Nǐ huì shuō Yíngwén ma?**. Here you see a different meaning: “likely to happen, possible to happen, liable to happen”. Here is another example.

Jīntiān huì xià yǔ ma?

Is it likely to rain today?

Part 3

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes after Part 3

bào: “To explode”, “to burst”. This is the verb to use when talking about a “blow out”. If a tire has slowly gone flat, the verb to use is **biě**, “to be flat, sunken, not full”. **Lúntāi biě le**.D

fādòngbùqǐlái: “not be able to start up”. **Fādòng** is the verb “to set in motion”, “to start”. **-Qǐlái** is the verb “to rise up” used as the final element in a compound verb of result.

tuídào: Compound verbs with **-dao** as the second syllable must be followed by a location of some sort and often are also followed by **lái** or **qù**.

Bǎ xíngli nádao lóushang qù.

Take the bags upstairs.

Bǎ chē kāidào lùbiarshang qù.

Drive the car to the side of the road.

Dialogue Peking

Dialogue Taipei

Unit Vocabulary List

Unit 2

Part 1

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on Part 1

Dialogue Peking

Dialogue Taipei

Notes after Dialogues Part 1

chāo sù: “To speed”, more literally, “to exceed the posted speed”

nádao le: Here you see another compound verb with **-dao**. But the addition of **-dao** does not add the meaning of “to (someplace)”, as in **tuīdao lùbiānrshang qu**, “push it to the side of the road”, but rather adds the meaning of “to obtain, get”.

Nǐ nádao nǐde hùzhào le meiyou?

Did you get your passport?

dài: This is the verb “to carry with one, to take or bring with one”. It is sometimes used with the verb **lái** when the meaning is “bring with one”.

Jīntian wǒ wàngle dài wǒde lìshǐ shū.

I forgot to bring my history book today.

Nǐ dài hái zi qù le méiyou?

Did you take the children with you?

fákuǎn: This can be the verb “to issue a fine” or the noun “a fine”. **Fákuǎndān** is literally, “fine money ticket”.

dānzi: Here **dānzi** is used to refer to the traffic ticket, a short way of saying **fákuǎndān**. In other situations, **dānzi** often means “list of things”. Here are some examples. Notice that the phrase “to make a list” is **kāi yíge dānzi**, literally “open a list”.

Měige Xīngqīliù wǒ chūqu mǎi dōngxi yìqián dōu kāi yíge dānzi.

Every Saturday before I go out to buy things, I make a list.

Nǐ néng bu néng bǎ nǐ yào mǎide shū kāi yíge dānzi.

Can you make a list of the books you want to buy?

Part 2

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes after Part 2

chuàng: “To bump”, often pronounced **zhuàng**. This verb often occurs with the resultative ending — **zhao**, “to meet, to touch, to come into contact with.”

Zhèr dìfāng tài xiǎo dōngxī tài duō. Zǒu lùde shíhòu,
bù shì chuàngzhao zhuōzi, jiù shì chuàngzhao yǐzi.

It's too close in here, too many things. When you walk, if you're not bumping into tables, then you're bumping into chairs.

chǔlǐ: “To manage, to handle an affair, to take care of something”

Wǒ bù huì chǔlǐ zhèijian shì.

I can't take care of this matter.

Nèijian shì ta chǔlǐde hěn hǎo.

He has managed that affair very well.

chū chēhuò: “To have a car accident”, or more literally “to produce a car disaster”. This is more serious than the phrase **chū shì**.

Tā chū chēhuò yǐhòu, hěn jiǔ jǐngchá cái lái.

After he had the accident, it was a long time until the police came.

lihai: “To be severe”, “to be fierce”, “seriously”

Tā bìngde hěn lihai.

He is seriously ill.

chū shì: “To have an accident, to have something go wrong.” This phrase is used to describe a serious, unpleasant happening.

Tā jiā chū shì le, wǒmen qù kànkàn.

Something has happened in his home, let's go see. (e.g., a robbery, an arrest)

Dialogue Peking

Dialogue Taipei

Part 3

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes after Part 3

xiūli: “To fix, to repair”.

pidài: “Fan belt”, sometimes simply called **pidài**, which is literally “leather belt”. **Pidài** is used for “belt” in machine terminology as in **sānjiǎopídài**, “V-belt”.

xiūhào: “To fix successfully, to repair successfully.” The syllable **-hǎo** indicates the result of the action, that is that the repairs were successfully completed.

Yào jǐtiān kékǐ xiūhǎo?

How many days will it take to fix it?

In the above sentence, the auxiliary verb **yào** means “to need, to require, to take”.

gūji: Originally this verb meant simply “to estimate (a figure)”. Now it also means “to guess”.

Zhèjiàn dàyì nǐ gūji dèi duōshao qián?

How much do you estimate this overcoat costs?

Wǒ gūji tā míngtiān bù huì lái.

My guess is he won’t come tomorrow.

In this sentence the auxiliary verb **huì** means “to be likely to”, “to be possible to”.

tiáozhěng: “To adjust, to coordinate, to regulate.”

Qǐng bǎ nàigè zhōng tiáozhěng yíxià.

Please adjust that clock a little.

gūjià: “To estimate a price.”

Zhèigè fǎngzi kékǐ mài duōshao qián, nǐ néng gūyigū jià ma?

Can you estimate how much this house can sell for?

Dialogue Peking

Dialogue Taipei

Unit Vocabulary List

Parts of the car