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L12 – What time is it?

Géi dím a? / 幾點呀?

Learning Tasks:

- To ask the time
- To talk about traffic
- To talk about the lunch time
- To talk about the working time

Grammar & Culture Notes:

1. *early, late in the daytime, late in the evening* ‘jóu, (ng) aan, yeh 早, 晏, 夜

a) When bound to ‘-dī,’ is ‘earlier or later than usual or expected.’

Example:

1) Ngóh-deih gám-máahn 我哋今晚早啲食 *We’d like dinner a little early*
jóu-dī sihk-faahn-lā. 飯啦. *tonight.*

b) ‘jóu’ ‘aan’ and ‘yeh’ may occupy the position of Time.

Example:

1. Ngóh kàhm-máahn hóu-**jóu** 我今晚好早食飯. *I ate very early last night.*
sihk-faahn.
2. Ngóh kàhm-máahn hóu-**aan** 我今晚好晏食飯. *I ate very late last night.*
sihk-faahn.
3. Ngóh kàhm-máahn hóu-**yeh** 我今晚好夜食飯. *I ate very late last night.*
sihk-faahn.

Remarks: ‘aan’ and ‘yeh’ do not mean ‘late’ in the sense of ‘not on time.’ The word for ‘unpunctual’ is ‘chìh’

3. Ready yet?**Dāk meih?**

得未?

“dāk” means ‘OK, all right’ and “meih”, ‘not yet’. Together they form a positive-negative question — ‘OK?’ or ‘not yet?’ i.e., ‘ready yet?’

Responses to ‘dāk meih?’ are:

dāk-la.	得啦.	<i>Ready.</i>
meih-dāk.	未得.	<i>Not ready yet.</i>

4. Time Expressions

a. The following time expressions are used in telling time in Cantonese:

dím or dí-m-jūng	點 or 點鐘	<i>hour, o'clock</i>
fān-jūng	分鐘	<i>minutes</i>
gwāt	骨	<i>quarter-hour sections of the hour.</i>
jih	字	<i>5 minute sections of the hour (jih literally means ‘figure,’ here the 12 numbers on the clock dial.)</i>

b. The above time-words combine as follows:

yāt-dím	一點	<i>one o'clock</i>
yāt-dím yāt-go-jih	一點一個字	<i>five minutes after one</i>
yāt-dím yāt-go-gwāt	一點一個骨	<i>a quarter after one</i>
yāt-dím-bun	一點半	<i>half past one</i>

c. “go jih” is frequently omitted in the spoken language as the final element in a time phrase

sàam-dím-yāt	三點一	3:05
sàam-dím-chāt	三點七	3:35

- d. “*daahp*” literally [*tread on*] is used in reference to the number on the clock face to which the minute hand points to tell time.

yāt-dím daahp-yāt	一點搭一	five minutes after one
léuhng-dím daahp-yih	兩點搭二	five minutes after two

- e. “*géi* – which number?” in time expressions operates as an interrogative number and occupies the position in the sentence which the reply number occupies.

Géi-dím-a?	幾點呀?	What time is it? [What number o'clock?]
Ńgh-dím.	五點。	It's five o'clock.
Yih-ga daahp-géi-a?	而家搭幾呀?	What time is it? [Now treads on what no?]
Yih-ga daahp-sei.	而家搭四	It's 20 past. [Now treads 4.]

5. Positioning of time expressions in relation to main verbs:

- a) A time expression which precedes the verb in the sentence indicates the time that the action represented by the verb took/takes/will take place.

Kéuih sahp-dím gaau Gwóng-Dùng-Wá.	佢十點教廣東話	He teaches Cantonese at 10 o'clock.
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- b) A time expression which follows the verb to indicate the length of time the action represented by the verb took/takes/will takes place.

M4-gòì-néih joi dàng-ngóh géi-fān-jūng tì-m-lā.	唔該你再等我幾分鐘添啦	Would you mind waiting for me a few more minutes?
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- c) Sentence suffix ‘*wá*’? ‘*wá*’ is an interrogative sentence suffix attaching to question-word questions, asking for a repeat of preceding sentence. It has the force of ‘did you (or he, etc.) say?’

Géi-dím-wá?	幾點話?	What time did you say it was?
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Bīn-go gaau-néih-wá? 邊個教你話?

Who did you say taught you?

d) *Measures: A Measure is a word in Cantonese which comes between a number (or a limited set of other entities) and a noun.*

go	個	<i>representative of a class of words called measures</i>
ngóh-go-biù	五個錶	<i>my [measure] watch</i>
yāt-go-jih	一個字	<i>one [measure] figure.</i>

In as much as ordinary English nouns do not have a category of word standing between number (and certain other modifiers) and noun, measures are usually not translatable in English.

sàam-go-gwāt	三個骨	<i>Three [measures] quarters.</i>
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The following sentence the [measure] substitutes the noun.

Kéuih go-biù jéun-m4-jéun-ga?	佢個錶準唔準㗎?	<i>His [measure] watch, is it accurate?</i>
Kéuih-go m4-jéun.	佢個唔準.	<i>His watch isn't accurate.</i>

e) *Adjectives: in Cantonese are descriptive words. Examples in this lesson are 'jéun, accurate,' 'faai, fast,' 'maahn, slow.' Adjectives can be preceded by the Negative 'm4.'*

Néih-go-biù jéun-m4-jéun-ga?	你個錶準唔準㗎?	<i>Is your watch accurate?</i>
Ngóh-go-biù m4-jéun.	我個錶唔準.	<i>My watch isn't accurate.</i>

Note that whereas in English an appropriate form of the verb "be" is needed when an adjective is used in the predicate, in Cantonese adjectives are used in the predicate without any other verb. Compare:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Predicate</i>
<i>My watch</i>	<i>is not accurate.</i>
Ngóh-go-biù	m4-jéun.

f) *Numbers: from 1 to 11*

1	yāt	4	sei	7	chāt	10	sahp
2	yih	5	ńgh	8	baat	11	sahp yāt
3	sàam	6	luhk	9	gáu		

g) 'yih' and 'léuhng' both represent '2.' 'yih' is used in counting off: 'yāt, yih, sàam,' 'one, two, three,' and in compound numbers: 'sahp yih, 12,' 'yih sah, 20,' 'yih sah yih, 22,' etc. 'léuhng' represents '2' usually, but not in every case, before Measures

Léuhng-dím	兩點	2:00
Léuhng-dím yāt-go-jih	兩點一個字	2:05

6. *Number-Measure expressions:*

a. *In Number Measure expressions concerning units greater than 1: For numbers greater than 1, fractions and other partials fit into a number expression following the grammatical Measure word, preceding the Noun (if any).*

<i>Ex.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>fractions</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>English</i>
1.	sàam	go		Jūng-tàuh	3 hours
	sàam	go	géi	Jūng-tàuh	3 hours and some
	sàam	go	bun	Jūng-tàuh	3 ½ hours
	sàam	go	dō	Jūng-tàuh	more than 3 hours
2.	léuhng	gàn		Ngàuh-yuhk	2 catties of beef
	léuhng	gàn	bun	Ngàuh-yuhk	2 ½ catties of beef
3.	sahp	nìhn			10 years
	sahp	nìhn	dō		more than 10 years

Note that the fraction part comes after the Measure, and that though most Chinese standard measures (for time, length, weight, etc.) are grammatically Measures, some standard measures are grammatically Nouns.

- b. *In number expressions for units less than 1: ‘bun 半,’ ‘half’ precedes the measure word in number expressions concern units less than 1.*

Ex.	half measure	Noun	English
1	bun go	jūng-tàuh	half an hour
2	bun go	yuht	half a month
3	bun	gàn	half a catty
4	bun	yaht	half a day
5	bun	nìhn	half a year

- c. *Approximate numbers:*

sàam-sei-yaht	三、四日	3 or 4 days
sei-ńgh-go yàhn	四、五個人	4 or 5 people

- d. *‘sahp géi’ [ten-several] ‘ten some’: is an approximate number representing ‘ten and a few more’, more than ten but less than twenty. All the round numbers, ‘sahp’ ‘baak,’ ‘chīn’, use this form in this way:*

sahp-géi	十幾	ten some, a few more than ten
yih-sahp-géi	二十幾	twenty some
baak-géi	百幾	a hundred some
yih-baak-géi	二百幾	two hundred som
chīn-géi	千幾	a thousand some

e. *'múih,' 'every,' 'each,' in Time Expressions: 'múih' occupies the position of specifying words 'nī, gó' before the number in a numbered time. Expression.*

Kéuih múih-léuhng-go láih-baai heui Sàh-Gaai yāt-chi.	佢每兩個禮拜 去一次新界	He goes to the New Territories once every two weeks.
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When the number in the Time Expression is 'yāt' 'one,' either the 'múih' or the 'yāt' can be omitted, or both can be said.

Kéuih múih-nìhn heui Sàh-Gaai yāt-chi.	佢每年去新界 一次.
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Kéuih yāt-nìhn heui Sàh-Gaai yāt-chi.	佢一年去新界 一次.	He goes to the New Territories once every year.
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Kéuih múih-yāt-nìhn dōu-heui Sàh-Gaai yāt-chi.	佢每一年去新 界一次.
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f. *Duplication of Measure word to express 'each and every,' 'every and all' may be expressed by saying the Measure word twice: 'yaht yaht,' 'each and every day, '; 'go go láih baai,' 'each and every week.' When the duplicated Measure is used, the phrase occurs in a set with a following 'dōu,' the 'dōu' appearing directly before the verb.*

Kéuih yaht-yaht dōu-hohk Gwóng-Dung-Wá.	佢日日都學廣東話.	He studies Cantonese every day.
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The duplicated measure word is only used for 'every ___ without expression;' for 'every two __,' etc., you must use 'múih.'

Kéuih nìhn-nìhn dōu-heui Hèung-Góng yāt-chi.	佢年年都去香港一次	Every year he goes to Hong Kong.
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Kéuih múih-léuhng-nìhn dōu- heui Hèung-Góng yāt-chi.	佢每兩年都去香港一次	He goes to Hong Kong every two years.
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Dialog Vocabulary:

	拼音	繁體	英文
🎧 1	baat-dím	八點	<i>eight o'clock</i>
🎧 2	baat-dím-bun	八點半	<i>8:30</i>
🎧 3	bòng	幫	<i>help; assist</i>
🎧 4	buī	杯	<i>a cup of</i>
🎧 5	bun	半	<i>half</i>
🎧 6	dá-syun	打算	<i>plan</i>
🎧 7	dàk	得	<i>all right, OK</i>
🎧 8	dáng-jyuh	等住	<i>waiting</i>
🎧 9	dī	啲	<i>some; a little</i>
🎧 10	fāan-dou-làih	返到嚟	<i>arrived</i>
🎧 11	ga-fē	咖啡	<i>coffee</i>
🎧 12	gàm-jiù	今朝	<i>this morning</i>
🎧 13	gàm-máahn	今晚	<i>tonight</i>
🎧 14	gáu	九	<i>nine</i>
🎧 15	gáu-dím-bun	九點半	<i>9:30</i>
🎧 16	géi-dím	幾點	<i>what time; when</i>
🎧 17	hòì-sàm	開心	<i>happy</i>
🎧 18	hóu-dò	好多	<i>a lot; many</i>
🎧 19	jáu	走	<i>leave; run</i>
🎧 20	jauh	就	<i>then; and; immediately; soon</i>
🎧 21	ji	至	<i>to</i>
🎧 22	jihng-haih	淨係	<i>just only</i>
🎧 23	jóu-chāan	早餐	<i>breakfast</i>
🎧 24	jouh	做	<i>to do</i>
🎧 25	jouh-m4-yùhn	做唔完	<i>cannot finish</i>
🎧 25	m4-jì	唔知	<i>don't know</i>
🎧 26	maahn- máan	慢慢	<i>slowly</i>

🎧	27	sàk-chē	塞車	<i>traffic jam</i>
🎧	28	seuih-douh	隧道	<i>tunnel</i>
🎧	29	sihk-ngaam	食晏	<i>eat lunch</i>
🎧	30	sìn	先	<i>first; advance</i>
🎧	31	tái-hei	睇戲	<i>to see a movie</i>
🎧	32	tìng-yaht	聽日	<i>tomorrow</i>
🎧	33	tóuh-ngoh	肚餓	<i>hungry</i>
🎧	34	yám	飲	<i>drink</i>
🎧	35	yāt-dím	一點	<i>one o'clock</i>
🎧	36	yéh	嘢	<i>stuff, things</i>
🎧	37	yeuk	約	<i>reserve, make an appointments</i>
🎧	38	yíh-gìng	已經	<i>already</i>
🎧	39	yùhn	完	<i>finish</i>



Dialog:

Mary and David in their office. 🎧

🎧 1 Yāt-dím-la. Heui sihk-ngaam la.?

David: 一點喇。去食晏喇。

One o'clock already. Let's go to have lunch.

🎧 2 Hóu-a, ngóh-dōu hóu tóuh-ngoh laak.

Mary: 好呀，我都好肚餓嘞。

Good, I'm also hungry.

🎧 3 Ngóh gám-jiù móuh-sihk jóu-chāan.

David: 我今朝冇食早餐。

I did not have breakfast this morning.

🎧 4 Ngóh-dōu-haih jihng-haih yám-jó-buī ga-fē-ja.

Mary: 我都係淨係飲咗杯咖啡咋。

I also had just a cup of coffee.

🎧 5 Gám-jiù, ngóh baat-dím-bun fāan-gùng. Seuih-douh daaih-sàk-chē.
Fāan-dou-làih yíh-gìng gáu-dím-bun-la.

David: 今朝我八點半返工。隧道大塞車。返到嚟已經九點半喇。

I went to work at half past eight this morning. There was a big traffic jam in the tunnel. When I arrived, it was already half past nine.

🎧 6 Gám-máahn néih dá-syun géi-dím-jáu-a?

Mary: 今晚你打算幾點走呀？

Tonight, what time do you plan to leave?

🎧 7 Hóu-dò-yéh dāng-jyuh ngóh-jouh, dōu-m4-jì géi-dím-ji jáu-dàk.

David: 好多嘢等住我做，都唔知幾點至走得。

There are a lot of things for me to do. I do not know when I can leave.

🎧 8 Gám-máahn ngóh-yeuk-jó pàhng-yáuh heui-tái-hei.

Mary: 今晚我約咗朋友去睇戲。

I have an appointment to see a movie with my friend.

🎧 9 Néih jauh hòì-sàm-lā.

David: 你就開心啦。

Happy you.

🎧 10 Néih maahn-máan jouh-la. Jouh-m4-yùhn, ngóh tìng-yaht bòng-néih jouh-dī-là.

Mary: 你慢慢做喇。做唔完，我聽日幫你做啲啦。

Don't hurry. If you cannot finish. I'll help you tomorrow.

🎧 11 M4-gòì-sìn.

David: 唔該先。

Thank you in advance.



Supplementary Vocabulary:

	拼音	繁體	英文
🎧 1	biū	錶	<i>watch</i>
🎧 2	bo!	啫!	<i>Suffix – expressing certainly.</i>
🎧 3	chà-m4-dō	差唔多	<i>approximately</i>
🎧 4	daahp-yāt	搭一	<i>five after the hour</i>
🎧 5	dāk-meih?	得未?	<i>Ready?</i>
🎧 6	dáng	等	<i>wait</i>
🎧 7	faai	快	<i>fast</i>
🎧 8	fān-jūng	分鐘	<i>minute(s)</i>
🎧 9	gái-dím?	幾點?	<i>What time?</i>
🎧 10	gái-fān-jūng	幾分鐘	<i>several minutes</i>
🎧 11	jéun	準	<i>accurate</i>
🎧 12	lā	啦	<i>suffix for suggestion</i>
🎧 13	lā	啦	<i>Suffix indicating change from previous condition: ‘has become’</i>
🎧 14	M4-gán-yiu.	唔緊要	<i>That’s all right.</i>
🎧 15	m4-hóu-yi-si	唔好意思	<i>I’m sorry, it’s embarrassing.</i>
🎧 16	meih-a	未呀	<i>not yet</i>
🎧 17	wá?	話	<i>Suf. ‘what did you say?’</i>
🎧 18	waahk-jé	或者	<i>maybe, or</i>
🎧 19	yāt-dím	一點	<i>one o’clock</i>
🎧 20	yāt-dím daahp-yāt	一點搭一	<i>five past one</i>
🎧 21	yāt-dím yāt-go-jih.	一點一個字	<i>1:05</i>
🎧 22	yāt-go-jih	一個字	<i>five after the hour</i>



Say it in Cantonese:

1. Q. *What time is it now?*

A. ...

2. Q. *If your watch is accurate?*

A. ...

3. Q. *If Mr. Fung teaches Cantonese at 2:15?*

A. ...

4. Q. *How to say 'five past three' in Cantonese?*

A. ...

5. Q. *You have a Cantonese class at 9:40 am.*

A. ...

6. Q. *To wait for me 10 minutes more.*

A. ...

7. Q. *Ok, he'll wait.*

A. ...

8. Q. *If you're ready?*

A. ...

9. Q. *That you are ready.*

A. ...

10. Q. *Tell us your daily activities.*

A. ...

<< End of Lesson 12 >>

