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Ticket to the United States

Wang Jiali
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TICKET TO THE UNITED STATES

by

Wang Jiali

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for
International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

Date: August, 1984

This project by Wang Jiali is accepted in its present form.

Date August 8, 1984

Project Adviser Michael Gerald

Project Reader Lou Withente

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Introduction

I am an English teacher of the Shanghai Foreign Language Institute and have been training students preparing to come to the United States for further study. They are the backbone of the scientific and technological contingents of the People's Republic of China. Their success in their study abroad will give great impetus to the realization of the four modernizations of China.

To ensure their better survival and greater success in their study during the time they stay in the United States, I think it is significant to provide some material both in language and culture which students will find helpful in the situations they are sure to be involved in the United States.

One year, from September 1983 to August 1984, my living and studying in the United States enabled me to work on this project which will serve the above mentioned purpose.

The whole project consists of written material (conversation text), visual aids (slides) and audio aids (tape).

The text covers 15 topics, each consisting of four parts: conversation, notes, questions for discussion and a role play. The slides and tapes, supporting the texts, provide specific cultural information and the real speech of the native speakers. The textbook is written with the particular vocabulary, colloquialisms, idiomatic expressions and forms of address used in different situations.

The project is based on my own observations and experiences in the United States and I hope it will be useful for students coming to the United States.

FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS

The conversation is between new students on their first day of school.

-Hello. I'm Tim Cook. I'm from Washington, D.C.

-I'm Susan Kaufman. I'm from California. You're a new student in the Language Department, aren't you?

-Yes. I am. How about you?

-I am, too.

-Oh, how do you do? I'm very glad to meet you.

-Nice to meet you, too.

Notes:

1. "Hello" is an expression used in greeting both in formal and informal situations. Nowadays it is used especially when people first meet each other.
2. "Tim Cook" is a person's full name. Tim is the first name, the given name, and Cook, the last name, the family name.
3. "I'm" and "you're" are the contractions for "I am" and "you are," respectively. Native speakers use them very often in speech.
4. "Aren't" is the contraction for "are not." E.g., "They aren't new students in the program." Only the contraction form may appear sentence-initially. E.g., "Aren't you happy?" It is incorrect to say, "Are not you happy?"
5. "How do you do?" Though a question mark is used, it is not a question, meaning: "How are you?" It is a formal way of greeting the first time people meet.

Questions for Discussion:

1. When people first meet and introduce themselves to one another, do they use first names, last names, or full names?
2. What is the difference between the names of an American and a Chinese?
3. Use contractions correctly in the following dialogue:
-Are you from China?
-Yes. I'm.
-Are you from China, too?
-No, I am not. I am from Japan. Sometimes it is difficult to tell Chinese from Japanese.

Role Play:

You have arrived at Kennedy Airport in New York and someone from the reception office of the school where you are going to study has come to meet you. This is the first time you have met.

INFORMAL GREETING

George, a student meets Peggy, his teacher.

-Hi, George.

-Hi, Peggy. How are you doing?

-Fine. And you?

-All right. What's new with you?

-Well, I bought a new house.

-That's great. Where is it?

-It's in town. We are getting a lot of new students for the next program and I've been reading their applications and interviewing them.

-You must be busy. By the way, are you going to the party tonight?

-Oh, sure.

-That's good.

-Well, I have to rush off. I'm interviewing one of the applicants in a minute. I'll see you at the party.

-See you then. Take it easy.

-Bye.

Notes:

1. "Hi" is used in greetings and is more casual than hello. Americans are often very informal. They usually say "hi" when they greet each other.
2. "George" and "Peggy" are the speakers' first names. Americans often call one another by their first names even when they do not know one another well. In some colleges and universities in the U.S., students sometimes call their

teachers by their first names. But it is common to address teachers by Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. followed by their last names.

3. "By the way" is a natural way to shift from one topic to another.
4. "That's great." A colloquial expression, meaning "that's good."
5. "Rush off" means to leave in a hurry.
6. "Take it easy." Used very often when people say good-bye to each other, expressing good wishes. It also means to relax.

Questions for Discussion:

1. When you meet someone you are familiar with, how do you begin the conversation? How do you end the conversation?
2. Can you tell the difference between the ways of addressing teachers and professors in Chinese and in English?
3. What do you think of the following conversation?
-Hi. How are you doing?
-Fine. How about you?
-Not bad. What's new with you?
-Well, I just bought a new car.
-Great. How much was it?
-It was expensive.
-By the way, how's your sister?
-She got a promotion.
-I'm glad to hear that.

-Excuse me, I have to go to the meeting now.

-Me too. Let's go together.

Role Play:

You have been in the U.S. for some time and have made some new friends. Now you meet one of them and he or she tells you that he or she got laid off and is looking for a new job. You want to get together later.

AT THE BUS STATION

-Is this the Greyhound Bus Company?

-Yes, can I help you?

-Could you tell me how to get to Providence?

-You'll have to transfer in Springfield, Massachusetts.

There's no bus going directly to Providence.

-When does the bus leave in the morning?

-Let me look it up for you. Well, at eight thirty and it gets to Springfield at a quarter of ten. The bus starts at eleven fifteen there and gets to the station in Providence at two thirty.

-Fine. How much is the fare?

-Round trip is forty dollars and one way is thirty-one.

-A round-trip ticket is cheaper, isn't it? But I won't be back in three months.

-It'll be good for six months.

-I'm leaving in two days. Can I buy the ticket in advance?

-Sure. We don't assign seats.

-I'll have to take a big suitcase with me. Will there be any charge for that?

-Nope.

-Which gate does the bus leave from?

-Gate 23.

-I think I'll buy the ticket now, but I believe I have to go to another window.

-Yeah, go to the fourth window on your right, marked "Transfer."

-Thank you.

-Have a nice trip.

Notes:

1. "Providence" is the capital of Rhode Island. It is the smallest state in the U.S.
2. "Springfield" is in Massachusetts. There are various Springfields. There's one in Vermont and one in Illinois, too.
3. "To look it up" means to find it in a book of reference.
4. "A quarter of ten" means "a quarter to ten." Americans usually use "of" instead of "to."
5. "A round trip" means a trip to a place and back again. In the U.S., bus, railroad and airline companies often sell round-trip tickets.
6. "To be good for" means to be effective, to be valid.
7. "In advance" means beforehand.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Where does this conversation take place?
2. Which is more expensive, a one-way or a round-trip ticket?
3. Why do bus companies, railroads and airlines sell round-trip tickets at a rate lower than the cost of two one-way tickets?
4. Do those companies in China sell round-trip tickets?
5. Have you ever heard of other forms of tickets?

Role Play:

You'll study at Harvard University in Massachusetts. You are now in New York. It's Monday and you have decided to take a bus there tomorrow. You go to the bus station in New York (Port Authority Building) to buy the ticket. You have the following timetable. You want to be in Boston by 5:00 p.m., but you want to spend as much time as possible in New York.

To Boston, MA.

Leave	Arrive
12:15a	5:25a
3:50a	9:25a
6:00a	11:25a
9:00a	1:35p Nonstop
FSU 12:01p	4:35p
4:00p	8:35p Nonstop

ASKING THE WAY

- Could you tell me the way to the nearest subway station?
- Let me see. You turn left at the traffic light. Go straight ahead and walk down two blocks. Then take a right and walk past the post office. Further on down the street you'll see a big building, the First National Bank on the corner of Park Street and Waterman Avenue. Next to it is the subway station. You can't miss it.
- Wow. It's far away.
- I think you'll find it easily.

Notes:

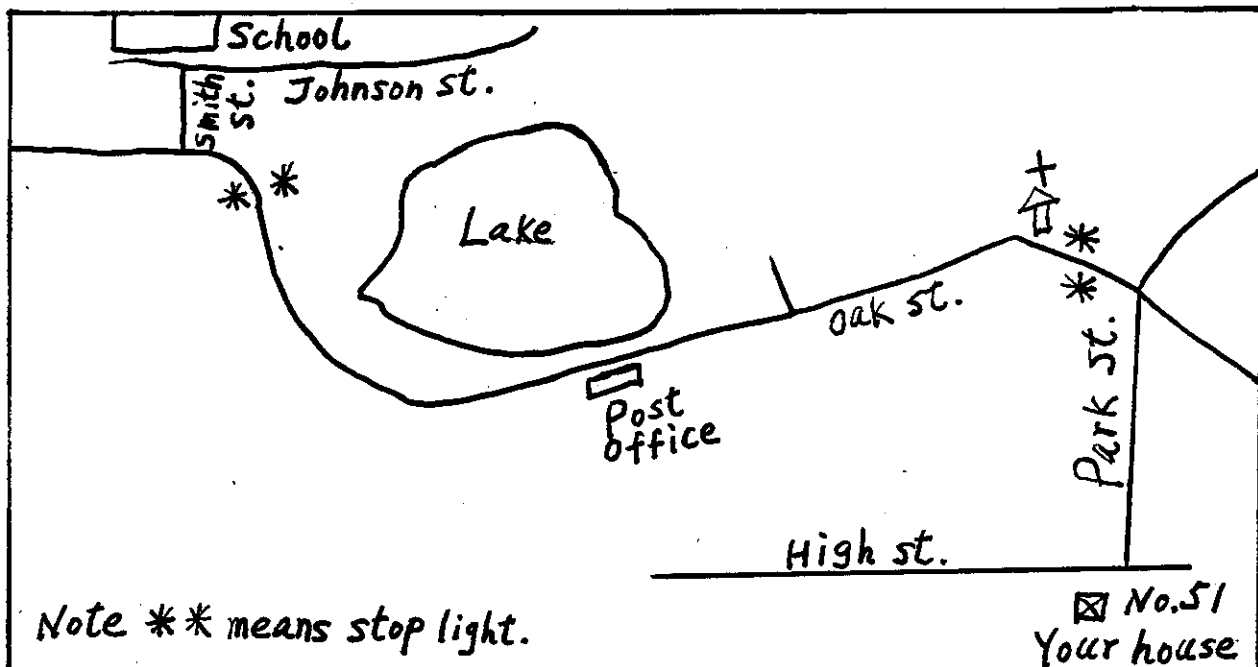
1. "Subway" is an underground electric railway.
2. "Block" is an area in a city bounded by four streets; the length of one side of a city square.
3. "On the corner of" means the place where two streets meet.
4. "You can't miss it." You can find it.
5. "Wow" is an exclamation, expressing sudden feeling.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you think the person who gives the directions appears well-informed about the place?
2. When you are in a strange city, whom do you usually ask for directions?
3. Is there any similarity between the ways of giving directions in Chinese and English? Can you tell the difference?
4. What are the main means of transportation in China? Have you ever taken a subway in your own country? Where?

Role Play:

You invite your classmate to dinner, he or she does not know how to get to your place from the place where he or she lives. You give him or her the directions according to the following map.



MAKING AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE THE DENTIST

-Excuse me, could you tell me when Dr. Davis will be available?

I'd like to make an appointment to see him.

-Well, let me see. He's busy today and tomorrow. Let's make it the day after tomorrow.

-My tooth's killing me. Isn't there anything earlier? I'd really appreciate if you could...

-He's real busy, but I think we can fit you in at 5:30 tomorrow afternoon. We are really doing the best we can.

-Thanks.

-May I have your name and telephone number, please?

-Peter Adams. The phone number is 257-9304.

-OK. I'll call you if there's a cancellation before then.

-That'll be fine.

Notes:

1. "Making an appointment to see a doctor or a dentist." In the U.S. it's a common practice for patients to make appointments before they go to see doctors except in emergencies.
2. "My tooth's killing me." A colloquial expression, meaning I'm having a serious toothache.
3. "Isn't there anything earlier?" Can it be earlier?
4. "Fit someone in" means to make someone available.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Where does this conversation take place?
2. What are the duties of a receptionist at a medical center

or in a doctor's office?

3. Is it generally necessary to make an appointment to see a doctor in China?
4. Do you think it is important to have health-insurance? If it is, why?
5. Do patients usually choose their doctors in China?
6. How many diseases can you name in English? Can you give a list of specialists?

Role Play:

You are now at the medical center according to the appointment you made the other day. Before you see the doctor the receptionist talks to you and asks you questions about your family's health history. She also mentions the form of payment you'd like to use.

TAKING A TAXI

- Taxi! Taxi! Is this taxi taken?
- No. Where are you going?
- To MIT.
- I know the place. It's not too far from here.
- What's the fare?
- I can't tell exactly. But whatever it is, the meter will show the exact amount of the fare.
- What's the rate?
- The first half mile is two dollars. Fifty cents for each additional mile. It will probably cost you ten dollars.
- Could you help me with my baggage?
- Sure.
- How long will it take?
- Usually half an hour. But now it's the rush hour. So we'll be held up by the traffic.
- I hope it won't be as heavy as it was in New York.
- Get in please. Are you ready?
- Yes. Let's go.

Notes:

1. "MIT" stands for Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is one of the famous universities in the Boston metropolitan area.
2. "To be held up by the traffic" means to be stopped or be blocked by the traffic.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Where does this conversation take place?
2. How do you get a taxi in China? Do you usually hail one in the street or call the taxi company?
3. Do you often take taxis in China? Why or why not?
4. What do you know about the bus system in the U.S.?
5. Is the traffic heavy or light in the place where you live in China? What do you know about the traffic in big cities in the U.S.?

Role Play:

You are going to the airport. You call the taxi company to send you a taxi. You are told that a taxi will be there in thirty minutes. It is the rush hour, so you ask them to send it earlier, because you want to be sure you will be on time for your flight.

AT THE BOOKSTORE

- Hello. Need any help?
- Yes. I've looked over the books here and can't find The Grammar Book by Diane Larsen-Freeman.
- It's in the section of English language books, to your right.
- It's a very good book for English language students and teaching foreign speakers.
- Oh, yes. It's the latest book and there's a great demand for it.
- How much is it?
- It's thirty-four dollars and twenty-five cents and the tax is a dollar thirty-seven. The total is thirty-five dollars and sixty-two cents.
- I think it's expensive.
- I think so too. Just because it's a newly published one.
- Do you have a book called Functional American English?
- Oh sorry, we don't have that book. If you are interested in it, I can order it special for you.
- Very good. Thanks. When do you think it'll be available?
- I can't be sure that it'll come soon, but I think it'll be ready in two weeks, at most.
- That's fine. You want to take down my name and address?
- Yes. I'll let you know as soon as it comes. Shall I wrap the grammar book for you?
- Just give me a bag.
- Here it is.
- Thank you. Have a nice day.
- You too.

Notes:

1. "Take (it) for granted" means to suppose something to be true.
2. "Tax" In the U.S. one has to pay tax for everything one buys, except food. The rate of tax depends on the law of each state.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Are textbooks in China expensive? Are they expensive in the U.S.?
2. Do you have to pay tax for things you buy in China? What kind of taxes are there in China?
3. Do the bookstores in China sell things besides books? What other things are sold in the bookstores in the U.S.?
4. Do you know where to get required course materials in the U.S.? Where can you get them in China?
5. Besides sales taxes, what are the other taxes people have to pay in the U.S.?

Role Play:

You go to an American bookstore to get the required course books. As a matter of fact all the books you want to buy are sold out. The book clerk there is ready to order them special for you. You explain to him or her that you are using them in a few days and ask them to do you a favor and get the books at an earlier date.

AT THE PHARMACY

- What can I do for you?
- Could you fill this prescription for me? I went to the doctor this morning and he asked me to take the medicine as early as possible. How long will it take to fill that prescription?
- In about fifteen minutes. You may have a look around the store if you like.
- I took some pictures at the beach in Newport a couple of days ago. How long will it take to have them developed?
- Oh, let's see. About a week. It's really a busy season now.
- Oh, I guess I'll leave them somewhere else. I really can't wait to see how they came out. By the way, do you have a new kind of tooth-paste containing herbs? They say it's good for preventing decay.
- You're in luck. It has just come in. It seems to be really good.
- I read the ads.
- We have a special on that today.
- Why is that?
- It's an introductory offer.
- I'll try a tube.
- I'm sure you'll like it.
- Would you give me a receipt for the medicine. My health insurance will reimburse me.
- Yes, I will.

-I'll go and get the tooth-paste.

-OK. I'll be ready when you get back.

Notes:

1. "Pharmacy" and drug store are used interchangeably in the U.S.
2. "Newport" is a seaside resort located in Rhode Island.
3. "I can't wait...." I'm eager to....
4. "To have a special" means a special selling of goods at a lower price than usual.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Where do you usually get medicine in China?
2. Can you get medicine without a prescription in a drug store in the U.S.? How about in China?
3. What are some of the varied items sold in the American drug stores or pharmacies? Do drug stores in China sell the same things as those stores in the U.S.?

Role Play:

You have finished the medicine you bought from the pharmacy and you think it is very good. So you go to the same pharmacy to buy it a second time, but this time without a prescription. You think it is okay, because you know the name of the medicine. You talk to the pharmacist from whom you bought the medicine the other day. He refuses to sell the medicine without the prescription.

CHECKING IN AT A HOTEL

- May I help you?
- I have a reservation for a room for tonight. I called you two days ago.
- What's your name, please?
- I'm Paul Moss.
- Wait a minute. Let me check. Yes, we have a single room reserved in your name.
- Does it have a private bath?
- Yes, it does. It's on the tenth floor.
- I assume it's quiet. I don't sleep well, especially in a new place.
- There's not much traffic and there isn't much street noise.
- That's fine. How much is it?
- Forty dollars a night.
- I don't suppose you have anything cheaper?
- It's a good price. You know prices are going up.
- Is there a dining room in the hotel?
- Yes. We serve breakfast from eight-thirty to ten, lunch twelve-thirty to two and dinner from five-thirty to eight. How long do you plan to stay, Mr. Moss?
- I plan on checking out Friday morning. I'll have to leave for Washington, D.C. by then.
- Would you sign the register, please?
- OK.
- Here's the key to your room.

Notes:

1. "To check in at a hotel" means to arrive at a hotel as a guest.
2. "To make a reservation" means to make an arrangement to keep a thing for a person. One usually makes reservations for rooms at hotels.
3. "A good price" means quite cheap.
4. "To check out" means to leave.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Is it always necessary to make a reservation in advance for a hotel room? What's the advantage of making a reservation?
2. Is it necessary to pay beforehand? Is this the same practice in China?
3. Have you ever heard of a motel? What do you know about them?
4. What kind of hotels does China have? Are they cheap or expensive?

Role Play:

You've arrived in New York in the evening, and there's no bus going to the city where your school is located. You check into the Holiday Inn (the largest hotel chain in the world). Be sure to tell the clerk that you'll check out early tomorrow morning and ask him to make up the bill in time.

AT THE RESTAURANT

- Have a seat, please. Here's today's menu.
- Thank you. There are so many dishes listed here that it is really hard for me to decide. Are there any particular dishes you would recommend?
- Well, what do you like, fish, chicken, pork, beef or vegetables?
- Fish is my favorite.
- It's the special of the house. Which do you prefer? We have cod, sole, scallops, herring, haddock and mackerel.
- I'd like to try scallops.
- Fine. What else would you like?
- Salad. A tossed salad with tomato and onion.
- Okay. We have different dressing for salad, what kind would you like?
- Oil and vinegar, please. What do you have for dessert?
- I think we have just about everything you'd expect to find. Apple pie, chocolate pudding, banana cake, chocolate layer cake, pie and ice-cream.
- Apple pie, mmm, it sounds yummy. It always hits the spot.
- Is there anything else you would like?
- No, that's all.
- The fish will be ready soon. While you're waiting, would you like to have something to drink?
- Water, please. I'm thirsty.

Notes:

1. "Salad" is a popular dish in the U.S. It is a sort of mixed fresh, uncooked vegetables with a sauce.
2. "Dressing" is a kind of sauce for salad, like mayonnaise and some other kinds.
3. "Apple pie" is a very popular pie served as a dessert. It is so popular that it has become a symbol of the United States.
4. "Yummy" is an interjection, used to express great delight, especially in the taste of food.
5. "Hit the spot" means to refresh or satisfy you, to bring back your spirits or strength, used especially of food or drink. It also means delicious.

Questions for Discussions:

1. What's the main difference between "western food" and Chinese food?
2. What kind of salad do you make? What kind of dressing do you use?
3. What different desserts do you have in China?
4. Do the Chinese restaurants usually serve desserts?
5. What are the popular dishes in American restaurants? How about in Chinese restaurants?
6. Who do you pay, the waiter or the cashier in the restaurants in China? Is it the same in the United States?
7. Is it customary to tip the waiters at the conclusion of the meal in the Chinese restaurants?

Role Play:

Your friend invites you to have dinner at an American restaurant. He or she asks you whether you'd like to have an appetizer. You haven't any idea what an appetizer is. He or she explains to you that it's a food or drink taken before a meal to whet the appetite, like shrimp cocktail, crab and tomato sauce, clam juice, fresh fruit cocktail, etc. You order a Spanish salad and you find out that it is uncooked with mushroom and spinach. You don't feel like having it, so you ask the waiter if he minds changing it for another dish. At the end of the meal your friend pays for it and you offer to give the waiter a tip. You ask your friend how much people tip the waiters.

MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS

1. Tammy has her friend Becky's new address, but without the phone number. She wants to call her. So she calls the operator to get the number.

-Directory assistance.... what city please?

-Would you please tell me the phone number of 105 Byrd Street, Flushing N.Y.

-What's the person's name?

-Becky Boone.

-How do you spell Boone?

-B-o-o-n-e.

-Hold on, please. Sorry I can't help you. There's no such name in the list.

-No, well, thank you.

2.

-Hello.

-May I speak to Sara, please?

-Yes, this is Sara speaking.

-This is Karin Keller.

-Karin Keller? I'm afraid you have the wrong number. This is Sara Smith.

-Oh, I was calling Sara Johnson.

-What number were you calling?

-257-9302

-This is 257-9202.

-I must have made a mistake. Sorry to have bothered you.

-That's all right.

Notes:

1. "Hello" is used in answering the phone.
2. "257-9302" is the number of a local call. It is a 7-digit number. To make a long distance call within your Area Code, dial 1 then add the seven-digit number. Outside your Area Code, dial 1, add Area Code, then add seven-digit number. Dial directly if you have the number.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why can't the operator help Tammy find Becky's phone number?
2. In China, can you get someone's phone number with the help of the operator if you have the address?
3. If you call a wrong number, what do you say? How do you answer a wrong number?
4. What have you learned about American names?
5. Do you know how to make long-distance calls in the United States?
6. Have you ever made long-distance calls in China? What's the difference between making long-distance calls in China and in the United States?

Role Play:

You are in the U.S. and you want to call China. You cannot dial directly. You dial "0" (operator) and tell her that you want to call China. She asks you what the phone number is for the place that you are calling in China. You tell her the number and she then tells you that she will call you back in about an hour when it gets through.

AT THE BANK

-What can I do for you?

-I'd like to deposit some money, please.

-Okay. Do you have a savings account with us?

-No. This is the first time I've deposited money here.

-What's your social security number?

-212-52-4562.

-Would you write down your name and address, please? And would you please make out a deposit slip? The slips are over there on the shelf, the orange ones.

-Oh, here it is. I hope I've made it out correctly.

-You need to endorse it. Please write your signature on the back of the check.

-Okay.

-Wait a minute. I'll be right back with your bank book. Here you are. Bring it with you each time you make a deposit or withdrawal. The interest is added to your account every month.

-Thanks a lot.

-Thank you. Bye.

Notes:

1. "Social Security" is the U.S. government pension and disability plan. Every person who works in the U.S. must have a social security number. It is also used on tax returns, driver's licenses, bank accounts and many applications. It is obtained at the nearest social security office.
2. "Deposit slip" is a slip one must fill out when one

deposits money in a savings account or a checking account.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you notice about the social security number?
2. When you are in the U.S., do you think you will get a social security card? Why or why not?
3. What formalities must you go through when you deposit or withdraw money in a bank in China? Are they similar to the procedure followed in a U.S. bank?
4. Do you know how to use a checking account? What are the advantages of using a checking account?
5. What happens if a person overdraws his checking account?
6. What's the difference between the bank systems in China and the U.S.?

Role Play:

You received a notice from the bank saying that your account was overdrawn. You go to the bank and talk over the matter. You show the teller your checkbook. The teller finds out that the bank made a mistake and apologizes to you for that.

AT THE POST OFFICE

1.

-Can I help you?

-I want to send a letter to China and I wonder if I can use domestic air mail stamps.

-You can use domestic air mail stamps for letters going anywhere in the world. But you need to add more stamps for a letter out of the country.

-Could you tell me the postage for air mail to China?

-I have to weigh your letter. The airmail rate to China is forty cents for the first half ounce.

-How long does it take a letter to get there?

-Ten days at least.

-Are you sure? Ten days, what a long time.

-It's much better than ordinary mail. It takes a couple of months. You really can't count on it. Sometimes there's delay caused by weather conditions.

-I see. Here's my letter.

-It's forty cents.

-Here it is. Thank you.

-Sure.

2.

-Anything I can do for you?

-This is a letter to my friend. I'm afraid she may have moved and I don't know the new address.

-You just write "please forward" on the lower left corner of the envelope. Don't forget to write your return address.

-Should I write the ZIP code?

-Yes, you have to. We started that service many years ago.

Anything else?

-I want to send a money order I bought from the bank and I don't want it to get lost.

-I'd suggest you register it. Do you want a return receipt?

-What's a return receipt?

-It's a receipt with the signature of the addressee returned by mail. It's your proof that the letter is delivered.

-That's exactly what I need. Is there a charge for that?

-It's only ten cents extra. Please fill out this card and write the address where you prefer the receipt sent to.

-I also want five twenty-cent stamps and four forty-cent stamps.

-Let's see. That will be six eighty-five altogether. Here's your receipt and the stamps.

-Here's ten.

-Here's your change.

-Thanks.

-You're welcome. Bye.

Notes:

1. "Air mail stamps" are for letters going out of the country. In the U.S. there are air mail stamps and ordinary stamps.
2. "Sure" means you are welcome.
3. "Please forward." It is a special instruction to send on further when you write to someone who has moved and you

don't know the new address. You have to write the return address (on the upperleft corner of the envelope) so that the letter will be returned to you if the letter cannot be delivered.

4. "ZIP code" is a group of numbers added at the end of your address. This Zone Improvement Program was started by the U.S. postal service in 1963. It helps the post office to sort the mail more efficiently.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Compare the ways addresses are written in English and in Chinese.
2. How about the ZIP code (or postcode) system in China?
3. Do you use province abbreviation in address? What do you know about state abbreviation in the U.S.?
4. Where do you go if you want to send money in China? How do you send it? How about in the U.S.?
5. Where can you subscribe to newspapers and magazines in China? Is it true in the U.S.? What is the connection between subscribing to newspapers and postoffices?

Role Play:

You have ordered an airplane ticket which costs you \$950 and the company asked you to send the money by check. - So you go to the post office to send it by mail. The post clerk suggests you register it, because it's a lot of money. He tells you the certain formalities you should go through.

AT THE GROCERY STORE

- Excuse me, could you help me?
- Sure. What do you need?
- I'm looking for rice.
- You want instant or regular?
- Regular.
- It's in aisle 2. It's a five-pound package.
- I can't find the ice cream. Where is it?
- It's in the frozen food section, over there.
- Can you tell me where I can find the milk?
- It's with the dairy goods over there. We have quart, half-gallon and gallon containers.
- How much is the cabbage? It doesn't have a price on it.
- Forty cents a pound.
- And could you tell me the difference between the two kinds of oranges?
- These are from Florida and those are from California. This is juicier and the other is sweeter. They are both good, firm and ripe.
- You are making my mouth water.
- They are five for a dollar. Don't you think that's cheap? It's the best price in town.
- You are really a good salesman.
- I want to buy some pork. Do you have anything lean? I don't like it fat. It cooks away to nothing.
- I'm afraid not today, but we're putting some out tomorrow.
- Well, which register shall I take it to?

-Anyone you like.

-That's twenty dollars and forty-seven cents.

-Can I use travelers checks?

-No, but you can go to the counter over there to cash it.

-OK. I'll be right back.

Notes:

1. "Grocery store" refers to supermarket. Americans sometimes use grocery store to mean supermarket.
2. "Package." Some packages show the weight in ounces and in grams because the U.S. is changing to the metric system.
3. "You are making my mouth water." You are making me want to eat very much.
4. "They are five for a dollar." It is common to sell oranges individually. Sometimes they are sold by weight.
5. "The best price" means the cheapest price.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How many people are involved in the conversation? What are their jobs?
2. Do you think the customer goes to that store very often? How do you know?
3. What can you get from a supermarket?
4. In the U.S., many people shop for food once a week in the supermarket, using a shopping cart as they shop. They carry their groceries home in brown paper bags. Do people in China shop for food this way? What are the differences?

5. What measuring system does China use?
6. Do you know how to convert measurements of weight? (oz., lb., g., kg.)

Role Play:

Make a shopping list first in which salad oil is included. You look for it for a long time but can't find it under that name. So you ask the clerk there for help. With your explanation he understands that you want "mayonnaise," a type of salad dressing.

You notice that the two kinds of peanut butter that are of the same size and have the same content are sold at different prices. You don't understand why and ask the clerk. He explains that generic brands have plain labels which cut marketing costs and lower the price.

LOOKING FOR AN APARTMENT

-I know from the ad that you have an apartment for rent. My friend and I are interested in it.

-Yeah. It's next to this apartment. Why don't I show you around?

-I'd like that.

-This is the living room. It's not too big, but there's good ventilation.

-Can I see the bedrooms?

-Sure, they are upstairs. This is the staircase leading to the rooms. This room is bigger. We'll give you a bed and a dresser.

-Do the windows open and close?

-Yeah. They have locks that work, too. And this is the bathroom to the right. There's a bathtub and a shower.

-Is there enough hot water?

-Yes. We're responsible for the hot water.

-Is the heating in good condition?

-Of course. It will keep all the rooms at 68 degrees during the day and 65 degrees at night. This is the kitchen. We supply the refrigerator.

-Is it a gas or electric stove?

-It's electric. It's easy to use. You just have to get used to it. It's not expensive to operate.

-Is the place near a market?

-Yes. It's within walking distance. It only takes you four or five minutes if you take the short cut.

-That's nice. Is the neighborhood safe?

-Oh yes. But you'd better use the lock just to be on the safe side.

-How much is the rent?

-It's three hundred dollars. It's really worth renting.

-If we decide to take the apartment how soon could we move in?

-In a week. It shouldn't be longer than that.

-I'll have to talk it over with my friend. Perhaps he'd like to see the apartment, too.

-OK, fine.

Notes:

1. "Ad" is a U.S. colloquialism for an advertisement.
2. "Why don't I show you around?" It is not a question expecting an answer to the 'why.' It means, "Let me show you around."
3. "To get used to something" means to get accustomed to something.
4. "Just to be on the safe side" means just for the sake of safety.
5. "To talk over something" means to discuss something.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Is the apartment furnished or unfurnished?
2. What do you think of the rent?
3. When you rent a room or an apartment, what do you consider most? Why?
4. How do you find places to live in China? Are they usually state-owned or privately-owned?

5. Are the rooms or apartments people rent usually furnished or unfurnished in China?
6. What do you expect when you rent an unfurnished apartment in the U.S. and in China?

Role Play:

You have read the newspaper under "Apartments for Rent" and are interested in one of them. You go to see the place and ask the landlord some questions that concern you other than the things you found in the ad.

Cranston

Furn. apt. 3 rm, lg. kit.;
nr. trans., pkg., ht. & h.w. inc.;
yard fenced. \$200. 461-6965

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