

American Greetings & Informal Oral English

Be a person, not a robot! Don't settle for “How are you?” and “Fine, thank you, and you?” Try some of these to spice up your salutations 寒暄语! Use them with people about your age whom you've met before (especially for friends). If you haven't seen a friend for a long time, “Long time, no see” or “Been a while!” are common equivalents for 好久不见.

QUESTION

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

(SOMETIMES THE BEST RESPONSE IS A SIMILAR QUESTION!)

怎么样?

还可以 All right. Pretty good.

How's it going? How's it hangin'?

跟平常一样 Same as usual. Same old, same old.

How are you doing? How ya' doin'?

不好 Not so hot/great.

How have you been? How ya' been?

没有以前好 (I've) been better.

你最近干什么事?

没事 Nothing much.

What's up? What's new? What's goin' on?

Been busy. **OR** Say what you've been “up to” lately:

What's the haps? What's happenin'?

I've been V.-ing (a lot).

How ya' feelin'? (How do you feel?) I'm... nervous, hungry, tired, sleepy, stressed out, feeling under the weather (sick), etc. I've got a cold/cough. I'm in a good/bad mood (because...). I need to talk to someone. I don't feel like talking (right now).

Note that only Chinese students say “just so-so” in response to questions about yourself. I've never heard anyone in the U.S. say they were “just so-so.” That phrase is for beginners and maybe for describing mediocre meals or entertainment performances.

你呢? Many Chinese learners exclusively use “And you?” to express 你呢? In informal situations, Americans are more likely to ask, “How 'bout you?” or “Yourself?”

Contractions 单词与短语的缩写式 Many English words and phrases get shortened when spoken.

Beyond the standard “not” → “n't” contractions, note these others...

It is very common in American informal spoken English to cut the “g” off of “-ing” endings, as in “doin’”, “eatin’”, “runnin’”, “listenin’”, “somethin’”, “nothin’”, etc.

·about → 'bout ·could have 过去分词 → coulda ·Do you know...? → Y'know...? ·give me → gimme ·going to → gonna ·have to → hafta ·have got to → gotta ·her → 'er ·him → 'im ·I don't know → (I) dunno ·let me → lemme ·ought to → oughtta ·should have 过去分词 → shoulda ·them → 'em ·want to → wanna ·What are you...? → Whatcha...? ·What do you...? → Whaddaya...? ·would have 过去分词 → woulda ·you → ya'

Most English teachers *hate* the word “ain't.” It does make the speaker sound less educated, but it's still very commonly heard, as in this sentence: “Ain't ain't a word, so I ain't gonna say 'ain't.”

Other Words & Phrases Almost Exclusively Spoken

·bro ·can't wait to V. 等不急动词 ·chick 丫头 ·dude/dudette 哥们 ·guy/guys (can be used for males or females except when being used to distinguish between guys and gals, guys and girls) ·hunk 帅哥 ·(be) into Sth. 喜欢 ·man (as in, “Hey, man. Could you lend me \$5?” or “Right on, man!”) ·(a) whole 'nother Sth.

In American informal spoken English, “when in doubt, take it out!” Subjects 主语 and helping verbs 助动词 are optional, and you can sound pretty authentic by speaking in short phrases and ignoring all the grammar you've learned! Just remember to put everything back in when it's time to write or take a test!