



## What About Vietnam - Series 3 - 19 – Learn “greetings” in Vietnamese language

**Kerry Newsome:** 00:01

Xin Chào and welcome to “[What About Vietnam!](https://whataboutvietnam.com)”. My guest today is Hà, a Vietnamese girl, who I saw a few years ago on a video she did on, “**How to pronounce certain Vietnamese words**”. It was hilarious. And she did such a great job, I really had to try and find her and track her down. She did it for a website called “[Hội An Now](https://hoiannow.com)” (<https://hoiannow.com>), which is absolutely a really fab place for you to check out if you want to know everything about Hội An. And she was so good in the video, I thought now,

“How can I best do this and use the podcast, being audio to make it consumable for people?”

00:45

I don't want it to be seen as a pure lesson because we don't cover every word. And we don't do it with an academic headset. But what I've tried to do with Hà in these episodes, which are kind of like mini lessons, is to try and present situations that you'll find yourself in, as a traveler. And these are just some of the most common words or the most words I found myself using or wanting to use. And it would have been handy to know. And because the pronunciation and the tone affect the language so consistently, you really, you really do need a Vietnamese to go through it with you a couple of times, so that you get the hang of it, you'll soon find out my Vietnamese is awful. So, I am definitely the guinea pig for the show.

01:43

I tracked her down, it was great to do so. She's actually living in France at the moment. And she's working there for a UK company doing English Vietnamese interpretation. So, she's really got a very influential job, she really knows her stuff. And I think you're going to love her on the show. The chance to use Vietnamese language comes up very quickly on your arrival into Vietnam, which, as I said, is why we've kind of broken it down into three scenarios. I'll warn you out. Now, Vietnamese is one of the hardest languages in the world. So don't feel like you're strange or inadequate because you can't get the hang of it, welcome to my world.

02:30

The first setting or environment is for “Greetings”. So, these are the words that are going to help you engage with the locals. And just offer that politeness. So, they're like:

- Hello.
- Please.
- Thank you and a few other extras.

So, I hope you love these sessions. I certainly enjoyed doing them with her and trying to get things right. I'm definitely going to go back to myself for practice when I get back to Vietnam later this year. So please welcome Hà to the program.

**Hà:** 03:03

Very happy to be here on this show. And I hope we have a good time together.

**Kerry Newsome:** 03:09

I'm sure we will. Now, I'm going to admit something to you. And I'm kind of ashamed of it, in the sense that I've been traveling back and forth to Vietnam for about 14 years. And my repertoire of Vietnamese words and sentences is very low, I almost feel embarrassed every time I say something because I know it's going to be wrong, and I can't get that tone and all that. So, you're going to have to use me as the guinea pig and everyone listening, I'm sorry, but I make the excellent guinea pig because this is learning for me, as well.

03:50

I'm hoping that you're going to use this as a resource when you do travel to Vietnam, because when you arrive in Vietnam, everything kind of happens very quickly. You're at the airport, you're getting into a taxi, you are getting into a hotel, and just trying to find those words that are make a nice greeting, make a nice welcome and Vietnamese people that you're going to interact with, make them feel like you're glad to be there. And you've taken a little bit of time and effort to understand their language. And it works very well when you can use Vietnamese words. Would you say I'm right?

**Hà:** 04:31

Yeah, you're right. You're absolutely right. When you arrive in the country, if you speak a little bit the language, not even Vietnam, everywhere. In China in Korea, if you speak a little bit of the language, it could be easier to interact and then to just have the feeling about the country and yeah, I think you're absolutely right. But Vietnamese is a hard language. So, I understand.

**Kerry Newsome:** 04:56

I'm really grateful you said that. Okay, so we decided that we would try and break it down into scenes or scenarios. And so, we decided we'd start with just general conversational. So, if I was to say "Hello", what would be the Vietnamese word for Hello.

**Hà:** 05:20

The Vietnamese word for Hello would be "Xin Chào".

**Kerry Newsome:** 05:25

Xin Chào. So, in the Episode Notes, I'm going to be able to put how that word is spelt, and then the phonetic sound of it. So, people don't worry that if you're going to try and keep up, you don't get to keep up because it's going to be all in the transcript. But just check me how I'm saying. So, Xin Chào?

**Hà:** 05:48

You are actually making the Chào go up a little. So, you have to go down a little. It's actually Xin Chào.

**Kerry Newsome:** 05:56

Xin Chào.

**Hà:** 05:57

Yes. Yes.

**Kerry Newsome:** 05:59

More down.

**Hà:** 06:00

More down with Chào. Yeah.

**Kerry Newsome:** 06:02

And when we see the symbols on the letters, that gives us an indication of whether it's down or up.

**Hà:** 06:13

Yes, absolutely. Yes. It's very easy for us because obviously, it is our mother tongue. But for foreigners, especially the westerners, it's horrible for them to pronounce this, they cannot make it right, but it's cute. For me, it's cute, it is what it makes it cute. So, I think if you even try just a little bit, no need to be perfect.

But when you speak Vietnamese, you give a little bit of effort in that. And I think it's cute, that's good enough.

**Kerry Newsome:** 06:44

So, I think for me, Xin Chào, has been the most common word I've used everywhere.

**Hà:** 06:52

Yes, yeah.

**Kerry Newsome:** 06:53

It doesn't matter what scenario you're in, if you can say that people will at least nod to you, like, that is a greeting. That is Hello. That's Hi. I do also understand we won't go into it today. But there is a way of saying hello. From a relational standpoint, so that you go, you can add to that, so that the younger than you or they are older than you. They are female. They are a male. Now that's where it got really crazy for me, well, I just tried to keep it at Xin Chào.

**Hà:** 07:32

Xin Chào.

**Kerry Newsome:** 07:34

Xin Chào, see I'm getting better already? [laughter] No, no, this is your job. This is why you're here. Definitely why you're here. So, I think you can also just correct me if I'm wrong. You can say Chào, just Chào.

**Hà:** 07:52

Yeah.

**Kerry Newsome:** 07:53

Also, on its own.

**Hà:** 07:54

Yeah, on its own. Yeah, we can just say, Chào. Very friendly.

**Kerry Newsome:** 08:00

Friendly way.

**Hà:** 08:01

Yeah. Friendly way.

**Kerry Newsome:** 08:02

Yeah. All right. So, then the next word I'd like to do is "Please."

**Hà:** 08:08

Okay, so "Please", is "Làm ơn". Làm ơn.

**Kerry Newsome:** 08:14

Làm ơn.

**Hà:** 08:18

Yes. So Làm is actually a down tone and ơn is a neutral tone.

**Kerry Newsome:** 08:24

Right. Okay, that's good. Now, the next most important word for me is "Thank You". Now. I say, "Cảm ơn"

**Hà:** 08:36

Yeah. We can get that. That means Cảm ơn.

**Kerry Newsome:** 08:42

Cảm ơn.

**Hà:** 08:45

Cảm ơn.

**Kerry Newsome:** 08:46

Cảm ơn.

**Hà:** 08:49

Yes. I think Cảm ơn is very difficult for you to pronounce because the word Cảm is the tone is a little bit- how to say it, waving. So, we actually have to say Cảm.

**Kerry Newsome:** 09:06

Cảm.

**Hà:** 09:09

Cảm ơn.

**Kerry Newsome:** 09:09

Cảm ơn.

**Hà:** 09:10

Yes.

**Kerry Newsome:** 09:11

I don't separate them well, but I know what you mean. Now, that's good. So, the next two words, which I think are important, especially when you're going to be moving around and things like that is, "Yes". What is the word for "Yes"?

**Hà:** 09:30

Well, 'yes'. It's a very simple word to say yes. But in different situation. You have another different way. How to say yes. So, let's say yes, as in when someone asks you something, and you say yes. You say, "đá".

**Kerry Newsome:** 09:51

Đá.

**Hà:** 09:51

Đá. D, A, Đá, with a very low tone, and this is very polite. And you usually say to older people, yes. And then there is another way, you can use it with friends or in the restaurant or some places that you are customer or something you can say, "Có", which is C O, and the up tone.

**Kerry Newsome:** 10:22

Right? So, Có?

**Hà:** 10:25

Có.

**Kerry Newsome:** 10:25

So, how would I decide which one to use? Say, you arrive at the hotel, the bus is emptying off your luggage? They point to that luggage, and they say something about,

"Is this your luggage?"

Would you say Đá?

**Hà:** 10:25

You can say Đá, but this is I just have a feeling,

"Oh my God, I'm very bad in my own language. I don't know how to explain it."

In your scenario, this specific scenario, what would you say in that situation? You can say another word, which also means Yes. You can say: "Đúng". No. Which means, "Yes, that's right." Đúng.

**Kerry Newsome:** 11:09

Đúng.

**Hà:** 11:09

Which is Đúng. You're trying to make it D, U, N, G.

**Kerry Newsome:** 11:15

Right. Which is counter intuitive because it sounds like 'don't' instead.

**Hà:** 11:25

Yeah. So, you can say Đá, you can say Đá.

**Kerry Newsome:** 11:28

Just say Đá. Okay. That is probably what I've been doing up to now? What about "no"?

**Hà:** 11:36

'No' is very easy. You just have to say "Không".

**Kerry Newsome:** 11:42

Không.

**Hà:** 11:45

Không.

**Hà:** 11:46

Yes.

**Kerry Newsome:** 11:46

Okay, great. So now, I've come into the hotel, say for example, and say, the manager is there, or the staff are there. And you want to say,

"My name is Kerry".

How do I say that? So, if I want to say,

"My name is Kerry",

like sometimes the staff- I might go into a hotel, and I'm signing the paperwork, they might say,

"How are you?"

And I'll just nod and say, "Good". And then they'll say,

"My name is", say, "Rose, I will be looking after you."

I want to be able to say, "My name is Kerry".

**Hà:** 12:34

Oh, okay.

**Kerry Newsome:** 12:34

"And I'm glad to be staying at this hotel." Just to be respectful and nice to people in their roles, etc. So, how would I say, "My name is Kerry"?

**Hà:** 12:47

You can say, "Tên tôi là Kerry."

**Kerry Newsome:** 12:51  
Tên tôi là- "Tên tôi là Kerry."

**Hà:** 12:56  
"Tên tôi là Kerry."

**Kerry Newsome:** 12:59  
"Tên tôi là Kerry."

**Hà:** 13:01  
Yes. Very good. Yes. Which is, "My name is Kerry."

**Kerry Newsome:** 13:05  
Yeah. Okay. And then. Say, they didn't say their name. What happens if I want to say:

"What is your name?"

**Hà:** 13:16  
You can ask them- you can say, "Bạn tên gì?" Bạn tên gì?

**Kerry Newsome:** 13:25  
Tên gì bạn?

**Hà:** 13:27  
Bạn tên gì?

**Kerry Newsome:** 13:27  
Tên gì bạn?

**Hà:** 13:33  
Not only Bạn, Tên gì, three words.

**Kerry Newsome:** 13:37  
Tên gì bạn?

**Hà:** 13:40  
No, Bạn tên gì?

**Kerry Newsome:** 13:45  
Tên gì bạn?

**Hà:** 13:47  
Oh, bạn is yours. Tên-

**Kerry Newsome:** 13:54  
Gì-

**Hà:** 13:56  
Yes. Right. Correct. So-

**Kerry Newsome:** 13:57  
What is yours-

**Hà:** 13:59  
What is your name? Yeah.

**Kerry Newsome:** 14:02  
So, what is the word for name?

**Hà:** 14:03

Name is then Tên.

**Kerry Newsome:** 14:07

So, everything is always back to front, isn't it?

**Hà:** 14:10

Bạn tên gì?

**Kerry Newsome:** 14:13

What is your name? Name is actually the last word in that sentence, where you put it at the beginning.

**Hà:** 14:20

It is actually Bạn, Bạn is your, Tên is name, so it is in the middle name.

**Kerry Newsome:** 14:27

Name, Your, What.

**Hà:** 14:30

Yes. Your name what.

**Kerry Newsome:** 14:33

Yeah. That's it. [laughter]. Now I know I'm totally confused and always have been. So okay, so let's just get it right. You say, it because I don't think I have a good pronunciation, but I want everyone that's listening to do a better job than me. Okay, go Hà?

**Hà:** 14:53

It's "Bạn tên gì?"

**Kerry Newsome:** 14:57

Okay, done. All right now I want to just two more and then we can finish off conversational. So, if I want to say goodbye, I finished at the hotel. I'm going home now, and I want to say goodbye to the staff.

What is the word for "goodbye" or "see you soon"?

**Hà:** 15:15

Do you want a simple way, or do you want a more correct way?

**Kerry Newsome:** 15:20

I want the simple way I think.

**Hà:** 15:22

Okay, the simple way you, you just say "Chào".

**Kerry Newsome:** 15:25

Just say Chào? Okay. You better tell me the complex way just so I know.

**Hà:** 15:32

The complex way is "Tạm biệt".

**Kerry Newsome:** 15:38

Tạm biệt.

**Hà:** 15:40

Yes, yes, yes.

**Kerry Newsome:** 15:41

Tạm biệt.

**Hà:** 15:42

Yes, Tạm biệt.

**Kerry Newsome:** 15:45

Okay, so that's great. So, I think we now move on to another scenario.

<b>English</b>	<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>Phonetic</b>
Hello	Xin Chào	Sinchow
Please	Làm ơn	Lam urn
Thank You	Cảm ơn	Cam urn
Yes (1)	Đá.	Ya
Yes (2)	Có	Caw
Yes (3)	Đúng	Du'n
No	Không	Khung
My name is X.	Tên tôi là X.	Ten to-ee la X.
What is your name?	Bạn tên gì?	Baan ten zi?
Name	Tên	Ten
Bạn	Yours	Baan
Goodbye (1)	Chào	Chow
Goodbye (2)	Tạm biệt.	Taam bi-et