

8.9 Jobs

8.9.1 Version 1

Jiǎ	Nǐ jiā lǐ yǒu xiē shénme rén?	Who (all) do you have in your family?
Yǐ	Bàba, māma, yí ge jiějie, yí ge dìdi; o duì le, hái yǒu wǒ ne.	My father and mother, my older sister, a younger brother; oh, and me too.
Jiǎ	Nà, fùqin mǔqin zuò shénme gōngzuò?	Well, what sort of work do your parents do?
Yǐ	Bàba jiāoshū, māma dāng yīshēng.	Dad teaches, mum is a doctor.
Jiǎ	Nà, tāmen gōngzuò dōu hěn máng ba.	Oh, so [I] guess they're kept pretty busy with work then.
Yǐ	Duì a, xiāngdāng máng. Yǒu-shíhou wǒmen háizimen děi	True, <they>'re quite busy. Sometimes we kids had to help them do the chores

bāng tāmen zuò jiāwù – mǎi dōngxì, zuòfàn, sǎodì, xǐ yīfu, zhènglǐ fángjiān. – shopping, cooking, sweeping, clothes washing, and tidying up the rooms.

Notes

jiā lǐ	‘in [your] family’
xiē shénme	<u>xiē</u> ‘several’ and <u>shénme</u> ‘what’ often occur together in sentences that ask for a listing.
dāng	V ‘work as; act as; be’; eg <u>dāng mǔqīn</u> ‘be a mother’; <u>dāng lǜshī</u> ‘work as a lawyer’; <u>dāng gōngrén</u> ‘be a worker’. <u>Shì</u> is frequently an alternative to <u>dāng</u> : <u>tā shì yīshēng</u> etc. Cf. also <u>Tā zuò shēngyì</u> . ‘She’s in business.’
xiāngdāng háizimen	Adv. ‘rather; quite’, with SVs: <u>xiāngdāng dà</u> , <u>xiāngdāng guì</u> . N ‘child’ plus <u>-men</u> , the plural suffix that occurs with personal pronouns and nouns referring to human beings, eg <u>lǎoshīmen</u> , <u>tóngxuémen</u> , etc.
bāng	V ‘help’: <u>bāng nǐ zuò</u> , <u>bāng nǐ xiě</u> , <u>bāng tā xǐ yīfu</u> , etc.
jiāwù	N ‘housework (house-things)’; in Taiwan, <u>jiāshì</u> is more common.
sǎodì	VO ‘sweep-ground’
xǐ yīfu	VO ‘wash clothes’
zhènglǐ	V ‘tidy up; arrange; put in order’
fángjiān	N ‘room’

Additional vocabulary relevant to talking about family

jìfù, jìmǔ	step-father; step-mother
zǔfù, zǔmǔ	grandfather, grandmother on the father’s side. <u>Wàizǔfù</u> , <u>wàizǔmǔ</u> are the grandparents on the mother’s side. In the south, g-f and g-m on the mother’s side are also called <u>wàigōng</u> and <u>wàipó</u> , respectively; and in the north, they are sometimes called <u>lǎoye</u> and <u>lǎolao</u> , respectively.
shuāngbāotāi	‘twins (pair-placenta-embryo)’

Other professions:

jìzhě	reporter	gōngchéngshī	engineer
lǜshī	lawyer	yīshēng ~ dàifu	doctor
jiànzhùshī	architect	jīnglǐ	manager
nóngmín	farmer	gōngrén	factory hand
jǐngchá	policeman	dàshīfu	cook; chef
cáifeng	tailor	yǎnyuán	actor
zhíyuán	clerk; office worker	sījī	driver
jūnrén	soldier	jūnguān	[army] officer
shǒuyìrén	craftsman	gōngjiàng	artisan
tuīxiāoyuán	push-sales-person	xiūlǐgōng	mechanic
diàngōng	electrician	kuànggōng	miner

wǎngōng	brick-layer	shíjiàng	mason
shòuhuòyuán	shop assistant	móshù-yǎnyuán	magician; conjurer
[zhèngfǔ] guānyuán	[government] civil servant		
gànbu	a cadre; government official		
jiěfàngjūn	People's Liberation Army soldier		



Mài shuǐguǒ de tānfàn ('street seller')

<i>Hold a job</i>	Tā dāng yīshēng. Tā shì yīsheng.	She works as a doctor. She's a doctor.
<i>No job</i>	Tā tuìxiū le. Tā xiàgǎng le. Tā shīyè le.	She's retired. (retreat-rest) He's been laid off. (depart-post) She's lost her job. (lose-employment)

8.9.2 Version 2

Jiǎ	Nǐ jiā lǐ yǒu jǐ kǒu rén?	How many people in your family?
Yǐ	Liù kǒu, wǒ àirén hé sì ge hái zi.	Six, my spouse and 4 children.
Jiǎ	Sì ge hái zi? Jǐ ge nán hái zi, jǐ ge nǚ hái zi?	Four children? How many boys, how many girls?
Yǐ	Dōu shì nǚ hái zi.	[They]'re all girls.
Jiǎ	Ó, sì qiān jīn!	Oh, 4000 pieces of gold!
Yǐ	Nà jiù shì liǎng dūn ~ dùn!	[Joking] That's two tons!

Jiǎ	Nǐ yǒu zhàopiānr ma?	Do you have photos?
Yǐ	Yǒu, nǐ kàn, wǒ tàitai, lǎodà, lǎo'èr, lǎosān, zuì xiǎo de.	I do, look, my wife, my oldest, my second, third and youngest.
Jiǎ	Nǐ zhèi sì ge háizi dōu hěn kě'ài.	Those 4 kids of yours are real cute!
Yǐ	Nǎlǐ, dōu hěn tiáopí, hěn máfan.	Nah, they're all mischeivous, a nuisance!
Jiǎ	Wǒ bú tài xiāngxìn, hǎoxiàng dōu hěn guāi!	I don't believe [you], [they] all seem very well-behaved!

Notes:

kǒu	M for people in a family, village etc.
qiānjīn	Literally '1000 <pieces of> gold', a tongue-in-cheek reference to daughters, eg <u>liǎngqiān jīn</u> '2000 pieces of gold' for '2 daughters'. <u>Liǎng dùn</u> 'two tons' is, of course, a humorous response. 2 tons is 4000 lbs or 4000 gold pieces. In some southern regions, instead of <u>qiānjīn</u> , daughters are described as <u>jīnhuā</u> 'golden flowers': <u>sì duǒ jīnhuā</u> '4 M gold-flowers'.
zhàopiān<r>	N 'photograph; picture (photograph-slice)', or more colloquially, <u>xiàngpiān<r></u> 'photos', both with level toned <u>piān<r></u> . Without the r-suffix, both words are often pronounced with falling tone on <u>piàn</u> : <u>zhàopiàn</u> , <u>xiàngpiàn</u> .
lǎodà	Children (sons or daughters) can be referred to as <u>lǎodà</u> , <u>lǎo'èr</u> , <u>lǎosān</u> , etc., according to relative age; also <u>hángdà</u> , <u>háng'èr</u> , <u>hángsān</u> , etc. (with <u>háng</u> 'a row').
xiāngxìn	V 'believe'

8.10 V+le revisited

As noted in earlier units, le (了) may appear at the foot of sentences to signal a change in phase (xiànzài hǎo le; yǐjīng chīfàn le), or it may intervene between a verb and its object to signal priority or completion. (Of course, if no object is present, then the two le's can only be distinguished by function – or meaning.) Historically, the two types – or two positions – of le are thought to have different sources. Post-verbal le is said to derive from destressing of the verb liǎo 'finish', which is also written 了 (cf. liǎobuqǐ), and in fact, in recitation styles, le is read liǎo, as in the following line from the song Dōngfāng Hóng 'The East is Red': Zhōngguó chūliǎo yí ge Máo Zédōng. Sentence le, on the other hand, is thought to derive from destressing of the verb lái 'come', so chīfàn le is, in an etymological sense, 'to have come to the present state of having eaten'.

8.10.1 Sequence of events

One particularly clear manifestation of V+le is found in sequences, where the second event is conditional on the completion of the first:

Shénme shíhou mǎi piào? Shàngle chē jiu mǎi piào.	When do we buy our tickets? Buy your tickets after boarding.
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And, of course, where the conditions are more severe, cái may substitute for jiù:

Néng chūqu wánr ma? Nǐ chīle fàn cái néng chūqu wánr.	Can [I] go out to play? You can't go out to play until you've eaten.
Wǒ zǎoshàng chīle xiànrǐng cái yǒu jīngshen.	Mornings, I can't function until I've eaten a meat-pancake. ('stuffed pancake')

In such cases, *V-le O* occupies the same position in the sentence as a time word:

Wǒ sān diǎn huíjiā. Wǒ chīle fàn jiù huíjiā. Wǒ xiàlè kè cái huíjiā.	I'm going home at 3. I'm going home after I eat. I'm not going home until after class.
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A sentence le can be added to the clause as a whole to indicate that the event has happened:

Tā chīle fàn jiu huí jiā le.	She went home after [she] ate.
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Le after the first verb in these sentences serves much the same purpose as yǐhòu 'afterwards', and in fact, where the second event is less likely to follow immediately on the first, yǐhòu may be preferred; or *verb-le* and yǐhòu may both occur.

Tā bì<le> yè yǐhòu dǎsuàn qù Zhōngguó liúxué. (Some speakers say <u>bìyè le yǐhòu</u> , treating <u>bìyè</u> as a compound verb.)	He's planning to go abroad to study in China after he graduates.
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8.10.2 *V-le with quantified objects*

Another environment that is highly conducive to the post-verbal le was noted earlier: reference to particular prior events. One manifestation of this is the presence of a 'quantified object' (a numbered object). Contrast the following pairs:

Zuótiān wǒ qù Cháng Chéng le.	I visited the Great Wall yesterday.
vs	
Zuótiān wǒ qù-le yí tàng Cháng Chéng.	I took a trip to the Great Wall yesterday.

Or:

Tā shuìjiào le.	She's gone to bed.
vs	
Tā shuì-le bā ge xiǎoshí.	She slept for 8 hours.
Tā shuì-le bā ge xiǎoshí<de> jiào.	She slept 8 hours of sleep.

- Cf. Tā yǐjīng shuì-le bā ge xiǎoshí She's been sleeping for 8 hours already!
 <de> jiào le.

A short dialogue

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| Jiǎ. Lèi ma? | Tired? |
| Yī. Hěn lèi, shuì+de bù hǎo. | Sure am, [I] didn't sleep well. |
| Jiǎ. Zāogāo! | Too bad! |
| Yī. Zhǐ shuì-le sān sì ge zhōngtòu! | [I] only slept 3 or 4 hours! |
| Jiǎ. Nà, nǐ yīnggāi xiūxi yíxià. | You should take a break then. |

For a Chinese speaker, the relevant criterion is probably not the presence of a quantified object per se. But the notion of 'quantified object' is a useful marker for learners trying to figure out whether le should be placed after the object (at the foot of the sentence) or directly after the verb. Other examples:

1. Tā huàn-le qián jiu qù-le yí tàng He changed some money and then took a
 gòuwù-zhōngxīn. trip to the mall.

Notes

- a) huàn-le qián is the condition;
 b) qù-le yí tàng is a 'prior event, with quantified object'.

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| 2. Mǎi shénme le? | What did you buy ~ have you bought? |
| ~ Mǎi-le yíxiē shénme? | What sort of things did you buy ~ have you
bought? |
| Mǎi-le ge táiděng, mǎi-le | [I] bought a lamp, a radio, a dictionary... |
| ge shōuyīnjī, yì běn zìdiǎn... | [I] have bought a lamp.... |

8.10.3 Other cases of V-le

There are also cases in which le intervenes between verb and object where neither the notion of sequence nor quantified object clearly applies. Such cases can only be accounted for by the more general sense of the function of V-le, as a way of checking off the fact that a particular event occurred. In the examples below, the particularity is sometimes indicated in the English by the material shown in brackets: 'my meal', 'her meal', rather than just 'a meal'. Rather than try to apply a rule that is inevitably vague, the learner will do better to shíshì-qíúshì 'seek truth from facts ([from] real-things seek-truth)'; study the examples, try to account for the presence of le and its position in the sentence, then test your concepts against material that you observe in your own interactions. Here are some examples in which the presence of le is probably not surprising, but the position directly after the verb, or not, may be harder to account for.

Shíjiān hěn jǐnzhāng, wǒmen qù-le Xīníng, kěshì méi dào Lāsà.	The time was tight! We got to Xining, but we didn't make it to Lhasa.
Wǒ xiān dǎ-le diànhuà, ránhòu qù chī-le fàn.	I made a phone call first, and then went and finished [my] meal.
Tā chī-le fàn, yě chī-le miàn.	She ate the rice as well as the noodles.
Tāmen shā-le Jiāng Jiě, yě shā-le Fǔ Zhìgāo.	They killed Jiang Jie, as well as Fu Zhigao.
Tā gānggāng chī-le fàn.	She just now finished [her] meal.

Exercise 7:

Explain that:

1. you generally sleep 8 hours a night;
2. but last night you only slept three hours.
3. you generally get up at 7:30;
4. but last night you didn't get up till 9.
5. After you eat breakfast, you walk (zǒulù) for 30 minutes.
6. Everyday, you do an hour's Chinese homework.
7. On MWF your 1st class is at 11:00.
8. You eat lunch after you get out of class.
9. Yesterday you didn't go home until after you'd eaten dinner.
10. You had to study last night, so you only slept 4 hours.

Summary of le (and related patterns)

S le	xiànzài hǎo le	it's okay now	change of state
S le	bù zǎo le	it's getting late	change of state
S le	yǐjīng xiàkè le	class is over already	new phase
S le	qù Cháng Chéng le	went to the Great Wall	earlier event
neg'n	méi qù Cháng Chéng	haven't been to the GW	didn't happen
V-guo	qù-guo Cháng Chéng	has been to the GW	had the experience
neg	méi qù-guo Cháng Chéng	haven't [ever] been to GW	hasn't had the exp.
V-le	qù-le yí tàng Cháng Chéng	took a trip to the Great Wall	accomplished (Q-obj)
shi...de	<shi> zuótiān qù de	went yesterday	focus on time etc.
V-le O	xià-le kè	after class gets out	conditional action
V-le O	dào-le Xīníng	made it to Xining	accomplished