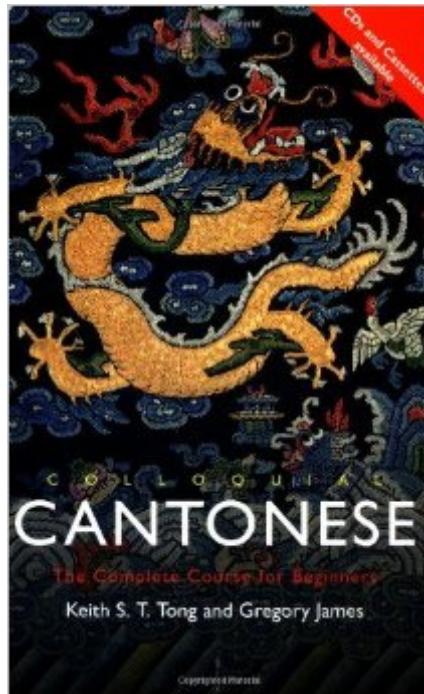


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# Colloquial Cantonese (Colloquial Series)



## **Synopsis**

Colloquial Cantonese is easy-to-use and specially written by experienced teachers for self-study or class use. The course offers you a step-by-step approach to written and spoken Cantonese. No prior knowledge of the language is required. What makes Colloquial Cantonese your best choice in personal language learning?\* interactive - lots of dialogues and exercises for regular practice\* clear - concise grammar notes\* practical - useful vocabulary and pronunciation guide\* complete - including answer key and special reference section By the end of this rewarding course you will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in a broad range of situations. Accompanying audio material is available to purchase separately on CD/MP3 format, or comes included in the great value Colloquials Pack.

## **Book Information**

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Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (21 customer reviews)

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a good book if you really want to learn the language and have a lot of time. It organizes everything by subject (time, shopping, etc.) with a list of vocabulary and dialogues. There are complete translations for any new phrases, plus they explain grammar so you really understand what you are saying and can apply it later on with new words you learn. The exercises are a little difficult until you really have a handle on the new words and phrases. You may not like this if you are going to Hong Kong and want to learn fast. This also teaches Hong Kong dialect, so there are some differences from Mainland Cantonese (my boyfriend's family is from Canton) but there is

nothing that won't be understood anyway. It really explains the tones and I have been told by native speakers that my pronunciation is very good.

I bought this system AFTER purchasing and using the Pimsleur language system and practiced both systems at the same time and found that an excellent way to pick up the language. The pace of these lessons goes quickly and the speed is a conversational speed so it is extremely helpful to have a small familiarity with the language to really excel with this course. My family is from Canton and my grandmother was my tutor as well. I would have her listen to both language courses and she as a native speaker felt much more confident with this course than the Pimsleur course, which tends to teach more formal speech. I highly recommend it. Especially a good tool if you live near a Chinatown like I do and want to be able to order food or buy items and use your conversation for everyday tasks.

You should NOT buy this book if: 1) you are going to Hong-Kong for a week, and want to get the basics of the language. 2) you already know Mandarin or any other language using Chinese characters. Why? The first 10 or so words you learn are different kinds of fruit. You have to memorize all these to be able to go on to the exercises. This may be fine if you intend to get a huge vocabulary, but for most beginners, 10 different fruits are not the most urgent need. The book goes on in the same way with chunks of specialised but not necessarily useful words. The next problem is that hardly any Chinese characters are used, so you get little or no help from your possible previous knowledge of Chinese or Japanese. I bought the book, because it provided CDs with the text, and I still think that's its main advantage. I still haven't learnt Cantonese very well, but I've started using another book (Teach Yourself) in parallel, and that helps a lot.

Very good course, but when I ordered it, it came without CDs, without which it is useless if you're unfamiliar with Cantonese pronunciation and tones. These I had to order separately. Why they even sell it without CDs is a mystery. Another major weakness is the lack of Chinese characters in the book. There are sections named "Recognizing Chinese characters" which introduce some basic vocab in characters, but it would be great if the dialogues, vocabulary and discussions of grammatical particles etc. included characters. This would be helpful, especially to those of us who are already familiar with Mandarin. This all said, it is an excellent intro to the Cantonese language and I am raring to use what I've learned in Hong Kong.

There isn't much materials out there to learn Cantonese, so I was very happy to find such a quality product. The speech is clear and by native speakers. The dialogue is "colloquial", so they will be useful. The Chinese is in Yale romanization - no Chinese characters. I bought the CD and uploaded it to my iPhone. I bought the Kindle version also so I can follow along on-the-go. Tip 1: If you plan to do use an iPhone, I recommend just buy the book. The Kindle version has a lot of formatting issues when read on the iPhone. The table of context does not work either, so you have to scroll. The Kindle version's table of context does work on my iMac, however. Tip 2: To get the most out of this book, learn Yale Romanization or Jyutping (which are very similar) beforehand, so you get the most out of this book.

I would not advise anyone to use books from the "Colloquial" series if they wish to start learning a language. The learner is expected to absorb a very large vocabulary and learn a great many new structures at a far greater pace than the average person is able to do. This is hard enough for a language very similar to English, but for a difficult language like Chinese the approach used in this series is quite unsuitable for beginners.

I bought this book + CDs after I finished another Cantonese text for beginners. If you already have some knowledge on Cantonese, this book really helps you learning more words and colloquial expressions. One thing I don't like about this book is that all the Cantonese sentences are written only in alphabet. If you already know Chinese characters, it is much easier to remember words and expressions if written in Chinese characters.

The most difficult feature of learning Cantonese is undoubtedly mastering its tonal system. This is a course which will get a beginning learner off to a really good start, if they practice faithfully with the accompanying CD set. The preliminary material on tones is particularly good because it demonstrates the contrast between the tones very thoroughly. Each chapter has dialogues that build up vocabulary in particularly helpful ways. The first chapter, about which other reviewers have been somewhat negative, has conversations in a market in which the speakers are buying different kinds of fruits. Well, you have to learn numbers sometime, right? From there you move on to talking about work, transportation, eating out and everyday life at home. Grammar is well treated too, although the books by Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews (also published by Routledge) are probably the most comprehensive source available in English if what you want is a really good grammar reference. One slight negative feature- all of the book is in romanization. Certainly a case

can be made that it is good to get a fast start in speaking Cantonese (or Mandarin) before settling in for the long, hard pull that is learning Chinese writing, but if the dialogues at least were written in characters it would probably make a Cantonese teacher's life a little easier.

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