

V I E T N A M E S E  
BASIC COURSE

GRAMMAR & CULTURAL NOTES

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## PREFACE

The GRAMMAR & CULTURAL NOTES contained in this booklet have been written to explain in a brief and descriptive manner the various points of difficulty relating to grammar and culture, which students in the Vietnamese Basic Course usually encounter when studying the dialogs or practicing the structural drills contained in Volumes I-VII. An index is provided on pages 79-81 to help the reader find quickly what he is looking for.

## LESSON 1

### Grammar Notes

#### Pronouns

1st person: tôi: I, me

2nd person: ông: you (man)

bà: you (married woman)

cô: you (single woman)

The presence of a second personal pronoun is essential in greetings and in expressing appreciation.

e.g.: Chào ông: Hello (to you, Sir)

Chào cô: Hello (to you, Miss)

Cám ơn bà: Thank you, Madam.

### Culture Notes

"Không dám" literally means "not daring" and is used to express due modesty and politeness (in greetings and showing appreciation).

e.g.: Chào cô: Hello (Miss)

Không dám ,

Chào bà: Hello (Madam)

Cám ơn ông: Thank you, Sir.

Không dám: You are welcome (literal translation: I do not dare to accept your thanks)

## LESSON 2

### Grammar Notes

Indefinite interrogative  
particles: đâu, gì, etc.

Individual Vietnamese words are often used in different ways while retaining their basic meanings necessitating on the part of the Westerner the understanding of the basic meaning of each word and a certain flexibility when translating the words in given sentences. Such is the case with a small group of important words we shall term "indefinite interrogative particles". These words, which carry either an interrogative or a non-interrogative sense depending on the context, include đâu, gì, nào, ai, and mấy, bao nhiêu, bao giờ.

#### 1. Interrogative

Ông đi <u>đâu</u> ?	<u>Where</u> are you going?
Ông học <u>gì</u> ?	<u>What</u> are you studying?
Ông là <u>ai</u> ?	<u>Who</u> are you?
Ông đọc sách <u>nào</u> ?	<u>Which</u> book are you reading?
Ông có <u>mấy</u> cái bút?	<u>How many</u> pens do you have?

#### 2. Non-interrogative

Tôi không biết ông đi <u>đâu</u> .	I don't know <u>where</u> you are going.
Tôi không hiểu ông nói <u>gì</u> .	I don't understand <u>what</u> you are saying.
Tôi không biết ông là <u>ai</u> .	I don't know <u>who</u> you are.

Note that when location is implied, ở is often used, meaning to be located at.

ex.: Ông học tiếng Việt ở đâu?

Where did you study Vietnamese?

### Culture Notes

Polite particles: thưa and xin

1. "Thưa" + 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronoun is used when one asks or answers a question.

Thưa ông, ông học gì?

Sir, what are you studying?

Thưa bà, tôi học tiếng Việt.

Madam, I'm studying Vietnamese.

2. "Xin" + 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronoun is used when one politely requests or asks for something.

Tôi xin giới thiệu ông Jones.

I'd like to introduce Mr. Jones.

Xin ông cho biết tên.

Please tell me your name. (See lesson 6)

Tôi xin ông ấy một cái đồng hồ.

I ask him for a watch.

## LESSON 3

### Grammar Notes

A. Note the difference between the following two sentences.

1. Ông học tiếng Việt được bao lâu?

How long did you study Vietnamese?

2. Ông (đã) học tiếng Việt được bao lâu rồi?

How long have you been studying Vietnamese?

Sentence #1 denotes an action which has been completed whereas sentence #2 refers to an act begun in the past and continued in the present. Observe that "đã" is optional and that the time of continuation is left indefinite.

B. The position of "bao giờ" "when"

1. At the beginning of a question, "bao giờ" denotes future.

Bao giờ ông đi?

When will you go? When are you going?

2. At the end of a question, "bao giờ" denotes past.

Ông đi bao giờ?

When did you go?

C. Cardinal Numbers

1. For 15, notice that "năm" becomes "lăm".

2. For 25, 35, 45, etc. up to 95, the 5 becomes either "lăm" or "nhăm".

3. For 21, 31, 41, etc. up to 91 notice that "một" becomes "mốt".

Culture Notes

Xin lỗi + 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronoun

To use this Vietnamese equivalent of "excuse me", remember that the appropriate second personal pronoun should not be omitted:

Xin lỗi ông.

Excuse me, Sir.

Xin lỗi bà.

Excuse me, Madam.

Xin lỗi cô.

Excuse me, Miss.

## LESSON 4

### Grammar Notes

1. "Vậy thì" and "thế thì" both mean "that being the case", or "then", and are used interchangeably.

Vậy thì mai tôi sẽ đi. - I'll go tomorrow, then.

Thế thì mai tôi sẽ đi. - I'll go tomorrow, then.

2. "Nhiều lắm" "very much, very many, a lot of". These two words are used together in that order when there is no noun to modify, but when there is a noun observe how they split.

Ông ấy ăn nhiều lắm. - He eats a lot.

Ông ấy ăn nhiều cơm lắm. - He eats a lot of rice.

### Culture Notes

"Đi bộ" means "to walk", but refers to the "means" and not the manner. When using "đi bộ" one should think of it as "to go on foot".

Tôi đi bộ đi làm. (chứ không đi xe)

I walk to work. (not going by car)

-versus:

Anh ấy đi nhanh lắm.

He walks very fast. (how he walks)



LESSON 5

Culture Notes

1. The word "phút", "minute," is often omitted in daily conversation, unless the number of minutes is not divisible by five, such as 7, 16, 18, etc.

Tám giờ mười. 08:10

Chín giờ bảy phút. 09:07

2. When "rưỡi" "30 minutes," is used, the word "giờ" "hour" is often omitted.

Bảy rưỡi. 7:30

Hai rưỡi. 2:30

LESSON 6

Grammar Notes

1. "Xin" literally means to "beg for something" (1), usually a permission (2).

1) Tôi xin ông ấy một quyển sách.

I ask him for a book.

Tôi sẽ xin mượn cái xe của cô ấy.

I will ask to borrow her car.

2) Cô Huệ xin đi Hà nội với bà Hiều.

Miss Huệ asks to go to Hanoi with Mrs. Hiều.

## LESSON 7

### Grammar Notes

1. "Thấy" means "just happen to see", without any prearrangement.

Tôi thấy ông Huệ ở sứ quán Mỹ.

I saw (just happen to) Mr. Huệ at the American embassy.

2. Gặp means to "meet, to see someone at a set, prearranged time or place." Mutual agreement is essential.

Tôi sẽ gặp ông lúc 10 giờ.

I will see you at 10:00.

Chúng ta sẽ gặp nhau ở hiệu ăn.

We'll meet at the restaurant.

## LESSON 8

### Grammar Notes

"Verb + được" means to "be able to, capable of" (in this lesson). Note the position of được, which is after the verb (either right after the verb or after the direct object).

1. Tôi không mua được.

I can't buy (it).

2. Tôi không nói tiếng Việt được.

I can't speak Vietnamese.

or: Tôi không nói được tiếng Việt.

When "được" precedes the verb, it means "to be permitted to" or "may". Keep in mind that it is often thought of as, and translated in, the passive voice (2 and 3).

1. Tôi không được nói tiếng Anh trong lớp.

I'm not allowed to speak English in class.

2. Tôi được thưởng.

I was awarded.

3. Tôi được bác sĩ chữa hôm qua.

I was treated by a doctor yesterday.

Also, keep in mind that "được" often carries a favorable connotation; the subject is able to, is privileged to, is allowed to, gains, gets, etc. We shall learn the opposite connotation later.

Grammar Notes

1. "Nào" often indicates a choice of certain items from among a larger group, and accordingly, it is frequently translated as "any" or in some cases, "any...whatsoever". When combined with "cũng," "equally, also, likewise, etc.," it can be thought of and translated as "every" or "each and every".

Ngày nào tôi cũng đi học.

Every day I go to school.

Sinh viên nào cũng muốn học.

Every student wants to study.

For emphasis, the word "hết" "all", is used and placed at the end of the sentence.

Người nào cũng thích ăn hiệu hết.

Everybody likes to eat out (in a restaurant).

Every single person likes to eat out.

2. "Mới" is used here as a conjunction to mean "not until".

Observe the following sentences.

(1) Ngày mai tôi mới về Việt Nam.

I will not return to VN until tomorrow.

(2) Sinh viên học xong mới được nghỉ.

The students must finish studying; only then may they rest.

or: The students are not allowed to rest until they finish studying.

In (2), "mới" indicates that the second action not only follows the first, but it is also conditional upon it. The correct translation should be "not until then" or "only then".

3. "Verb + hộ" denotes "help or assistance." It has the characteristic of a modal auxiliary verb. Therefore, it is usually used with a verb.

Bán hộ tôi cái xe này.

(Please) sell this car for me.

Xin ông hỏi hộ xem ông ấy có biết không.

Please find out if he knows (it).

Lit.: Please ask (for me) to see if he knows.

LESSON 10

Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

"Lâu quá mới" gặp lại anh chị.

It's been a long time since we last saw you.

Culture Notes

Note the following two sentences which essentially say the same thing, but are different in essence.

1. Chúng tôi chỉ có hai cháu thôi.

We have only two children.

2. Chúng tôi mới được hai cháu thôi.

We have only two children so far.

Sentence #1 states the fact, more or less, while sentence #2, however, expresses the idea of their having two children, but they are wishing for or expecting more.

## LESSON 11

### Grammar Notes

#### Prohibitive đừng

"Đừng", a negative imperative particle, is used when telling someone "not" to do something and can be preceded by a pronoun.

Đừng ở một mình!

Don't live by yourself!

or: Ông đừng ở một mình!

### Culture Notes

1. "Bác" literally means "uncle or aunt" who is older than one's father. Therefore we only use this term instead of ông or bà when we are actually related, have known each other for a long time, or, though less frequent, when we subtly imply we want to be friendly. "Bác" is also used to refer to people of our parents' age.
2. In a loose translation, you find that both "xin lỗi ông," and "xin phép ông" are translated as "excuse me". But "xin lỗi ông" implies "I beg your pardon" or "excuse me" while "xin phép ông" implies "I ask for your permission".



## LESSON 12

### Grammar Notes

When you command or tell someone to do something, use the the imperative particle "đi" and place it at the end of the sentence.

Học đi!

Study!

Học tiếng Việt đi!

Study Vietnamese!

## LESSON 13

### Grammar Notes

In this lesson "thử" "to try," is used as a modal auxiliary verb which is always preceded by the main verb(s).

Tôi muốn uống thử bia 33.

I want to try beer 33.

Tôi muốn lái thử xe của ông.

I want to try your car.

## LESSON 14

### Grammar Notes

Observe the following two sentences:

1. Tôi có năm cái chai.

I have five bottles.

2. Tôi có năm chai.

I have five bottles (of something).

The first sentence means five empty bottles and the second sentence indicates five bottles of something, but not empty.

The difference is the classifier "cái".

LESSON 15

Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

Họ lấy bao nhiêu một giờ?

How much do they charge for an hour?

Họ không lấy bao nhiêu đâu!

They do not charge too much!

## LESSON 16

### Grammar Notes

The usage of lại, after the main verb, is rather difficult because of its irregularity and flexibility. Usually "verb + lại" means to do something again or re-do something.

Tôi viết lại cái thư này.

I am rewriting this letter.

Tôi đọc lại quyển sách này.

I'm reading this book again.

But sometimes, with certain verbs, one must rely on the context for accurate translation. Because whatever is being redone is not necessarily the same thing that was done before. (p. 182, Volume 2)

Bao giờ ông đi dạy lại?

When are you going back to teach (again)?

Bao giờ anh đi học lại?

Where are you going back to school?

LESSON 17

Grammar Notes

1. "thay," when used as a main verb means "to replace" something with something else.

Lốp xe này cũ anh phải thay đi.

This tire is old, you must replace it.

But, when "thay" is used with another verb, it means to take "someone's" place to do something, to substitute (for someone).

Cô Lan ốm nên tôi dạy thay.

Miss Lan is sick, so I am teaching in her place.

or: Miss Lan is sick and I am substituting for her.

2. "thế" and "vậy" both mean in "that" manner, in "such" manner, when they are preceded by a verb. Thế and vậy frequently occur in combination with the word như.

Đừng làm thế (vậy).

Don't do that. (Lit.: Don't do it in that manner.)

Tôi cũng nghĩ vậy.

I think so too. (Lit.: I also think in that way.)

or: Đừng làm như thế.

Tôi cũng nghĩ như vậy.

## LESSON 18

### Culture Notes

"Nó" is "he, she, or it." When referring to people of your age or social position, it becomes a disrespectful term.

However, it is perfectly acceptable to use "nó" to refer to animals, children of your own, or the younger members of your family."

1. Nó cùng làm một sở với tôi.

He (she) works in the same office with me.

2. Bình ắc quy hỏng hả? Thay nó đi!

Your battery is dead? Replace it!

3. Tôi đánh chó vì nó hư!

I hit the dog because he (she, it) was naughty.

4. Mình à, hôm qua con Lan nó có nhớ mua cà phê không?

Honey, did Lan remember to buy coffee yesterday?

5. Tôi gọi em tôi và bảo nó làm cơm.

I called my (younger) sister and told her to fix dinner.

### Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

đắt kinh khủng! - terribly expensive!

LESSON 19

Grammar Notes

Observe the position of "cả" in the following examples:

"Cả † noun  
pronoun"

Cả ngày - all day

Cả tháng - the whole week

Differentiate that from the following pattern:

...không...cả - not...at all

Subject † negative marker † verb...cả.

Tôi không làm gì cả.

I am not doing anything.

Tôi không đi đâu cả.

I am not going anywhere.

Tôi không muốn nói với ai cả.

I do not want to talk to anyone.

Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

đi xin việc - to go and apply for a job



LESSON 20

Culture Notes

1. When we wish somebody something, we use the verb chúc.

Tôi chúc ông nhiều may mắn.

I wish you lots of luck.

Do not use chúc in wishing yourself as in the case of "I wish I were". In this case "ước" is used instead.

2. "He or she" in Vietnamese is "ông ây, bà ây, cô ây" or "ông ta, bà ta, cô ta". But "ta" often insinuates a light touch of disdain, mocking, or a slight sneer.

LESSON 21

Grammar Notes

- A. "Đang + verb" means "to be in the process of doing something" but it is usually used to emphasize that action is taking place as in example (1), or to indicate that two actions took place simultaneously (2).

1. Mời ông dùng gà quay.

Please have some roast chicken.

Cám ơn ông, tôi đang ăn.

Thank you, I am eating it.

2. Tôi đang học thì ông ấy vào.

He walked in while I was studying.

Tôi đang ăn thì nó đánh tôi.

He hit me while I was eating.

Compare the above sentences with the following examples in which "đang" is not necessary.

1. Ông đi đâu đây?

Where are you going there?

2. Tôi đi học.

I am going to school.

"Đang + verb" is usually not used to mark present tense, but rather to emphasize the action which is taking place. Keep in mind also that "tôi đi" can be translated as "I go", "I am going", or "I do go". When đang is used in the past it is not used in combination with "đã".

Hôm qua tôi đang ngủ thì máy bay đến thả bom.

I was sleeping yesterday when the plane came and  
dropped bombs.

B. Note that "là cùng" "at most" is placed at the end of the  
sentence.

Ông ta có mười mĩ kim là cùng.

He has ten dollars at most.

LESSON 22

Grammar Notes

"À" is a question marker usually conveying primarily the "mood, the attitude, of the speaker," in this case a mild surprise.

Anh vẫn chưa lấy vợ à?

Oh! Are you still a bachelor?

Cô vẫn ở nhà à?

Oh! Are you still home?

Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

Theo tôi biết thì ông ấy không có nhà.

As far as I know, he is not at home.

Theo tôi hiểu thì quyển tự vựng đó không tốt.

In my understanding, that dictionary is not a good one.

LESSON 23

Culture Notes

"Tôn" means "to cost," but implies maintenance, up-keep, service when having things made or done.

Sống ở California tôn lắm.

It costs a lot to live in California.

Mở một hiệu ăn tôn lắm.

It costs a lot to open a restaurant.

Chơi xe này tôn lắm.

It costs a lot to operate this car.

Notice the following case in which "tôn" cannot be used to translate the verb "cost". A and B are talking about the dress B bought.

A: How much did it cost?

B: Oh! It cost only a dollar.

## LESSON 24

### Culture Notes

The English word "nice" can mean different things to different people. But in Vietnamese, when we say "ông tử tề quá" we mean just one thing: you are very kind.

### Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

cuộc bộ

-

to go on foot

## LESSON 25

### Grammar Notes

To denote a mishap, an unpleasant experience, the word phải is added to the main verb.

Tôi dẫm phải chông ngâm.

I stepped on a concealed spike.

Tôi ăn phải thịt bò ôi.

I ate some stale beef.

### Culture Notes

1. In Vietnamese, the word "đi" means to "help someone to walk when he is physically incapacitated due to illness, injury, etc."
2. "Ngâm" usually means "being submerged or being under the ground (below ground level)."

tàu ngâm	-	submarine
chông ngâm	-	punji sticks planted below ground level
hầm ngâm	-	dug-out

### Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

cầm máu	-	to stop the bleeding
sang máu	-	blood transfusion

## LESSON 26

### Grammar Notes

The preposition "vào" means either "at" or "into" and is used with a noun or personal pronoun to show its relation to some other word or words in the sentence.

Nó đánh vào đầu tôi.

He hit me on the head.

Nó ném quyển sách vào mặt cô ấy.

He threw the book at her face.

### Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

1. Q: Anh có việc gì không?

Are you hurt?

A: Tôi không việc gì cả?

No, I am fine.

2. Không việc gì đến ông.

It's none of your business.



LESSON 27

Grammar Notes

A. Rơi is an intransitive verb and takes no direct object.

Tôi bắn máy bay F-4 và nó rơi.

I shot the F-4 and it fell.

Tôi trông thấy hai máy bay rơi xuống bể.

I saw two planes falling into the sea.

B. Làm rơi or đánh rơi is a transitive verb and takes a direct object.

Tôi làm rơi cái bát.

I dropped the bowl.

Tôi không biết tôi đánh rơi ví ở đâu.

I don't know where I dropped my wallet.

## LESSON 28

### Culture Notes

"Chúng and chúng nó" are derogatory terms for "they" or "them" commonly used to refer to hoodlums, gangsters, and the enemy.

## LESSON 29

### Grammar Notes

Post position particle với

"Với" here means "along with or in the company of."

Cho tôi đi với!

Let me come / go along.

Đề tôi học với!

Let me study with (you).

### Culture Notes

A. The difference between "cho tôi đi với" and "đề tôi đi với" is very subtle even though they are translated as "let me go too" or "let me go with you". The first sentence implies asking for permission or approval, while the second sentence implies asking on equal terms.

B. "Hẹn" can be used either as a verb to "mean an engagement or as a noun to mean the appointment itself."

Tôi có hẹn lúc 2 giờ.

I have a two o'clock engagement.

Họ hẹn nhau ở nhà anh Lâm.

They rendez-vous at Lam's place.

## LESSON 30

### Grammar Notes

"Là" and "rằng" in Vietnamese usually are filling up words which are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence, but which herald the subsequent clause. Their English equivalent is the expletive that.

Tôi biết là ông ấy nói thật.

I know that he speaks the truth.

Cô ấy muốn nói rằng anh nên cởi mở hơn.

She wants to say that you should be more open.

Rằng and là here are actually superfluous and redundant because the meaning is complete without them. In modern formal prose, rằng is usually used to introduce direct or indirect quotations.

LESSON 31

Grammar Notes

"Đây chứ" at the end of a question invites corroborative answers.

Cô Lan đẹp đây chứ?

Miss Lan is beautiful, isn't she?

Here "đây" is an emphatic particle. "Chứ" is a form of question marker. When you ask someone a question using chứ you obviously want the listener to agree with you.

LESSON 32

Culture Notes

"Thấy" means either "to feel, to find, or to seem."

Tôi thấy mệt quá.

I feel very tired.

Tôi thấy làm việc này khó lắm.

I find it is difficult to do this job.

Tôi thấy ông ấy hơi yếu.

He seems a little weak.

"Thấy" used mainly as second head (unclear model or complete sentence) in sequential phrases referring to perception via one of the physical senses.

Tôi nghe thấy tiếng giáo sư.

I hear the voice of the teacher.

Trông thấy tôi ông ấy mừng quá.

He is very pleased to see me.

Tôi ngửi thấy mùi cà-phê.

I smell the aroma of coffee.

LESSON 33

Grammar Notes

- A. "Khỏi" means "out of" or "away from" and is followed by a noun of location.

Cô ấy ra khỏi phòng.

She walks out of the room.

Dân làng đi tản khỏi vùng Huế.

The villagers are evacuated away from Hue.

- B. "Mưa" means to "rain" and like its English counterpart, it is governed by the impersonal pronoun "trời or giời" (heaven, sky, or it, when it refers to weather).

Giời mưa.            -            It's raining.

Giời nóng.           -            It's hot

Giời đánh!          -            Heaven struck!

- C. "Làm lụt", to flood is a transitive verb that takes a direct object.

Nước lên làm lụt cả vùng.

The water rose and flooded the entire area.

LESSON 34

Grammar Notes

- A. The following formula will help you use "...thì đến..." "out of" correctly. Don't let its English equivalent confuse you. Thì đến must be placed between two nouns or personal pronouns.

Năm cái máy phát thanh thì đến ba cái bị hỏng.

Out of five radio transmitters, three are out of order.

Năm ông thì đến ba ông mù chữ.

Out of five men, three are illiterate.

- B. The verb "cuốn...đi", "to carry away (water, wind)" takes a direct object, and đi must be placed after that direct object.

Nước cuốn cả nhà đi rồi.

The water carried the house away.

Gió cuốn thuyền đi rồi.

The wind carried the boat away.

Culture Notes

"Xấu" when used to "describe people, animals, and things" does not mean "bad" in character or personality, but "ugly in appearance".

Cái xe này xấu. - This car is ugly.

Cô ấy xấu. - She's ugly.



## LESSON 35

### Grammar Notes

#### Bị versus Được

"bị!" "suffer, undergo," be affected adversely by some action, state, or factor

"được!" "receive, get, be benefited by, affected favorably by" some action, state, or factor, be permitted

1. Nhà tôi bị đổi đi Việt-nam.

My husband was transferred to Viet Nam.

2. Nhà tôi được đi Việt-nam.

Sentence #2 conveys the desirability, the benefit the subject receives.

Note: Keep in mind that an important way in which Vietnamese verbs differ from English verbs is that they do not in themselves imply a clear notion of "mood" in the grammatical sense. In English a (transitive) verb must be either active or passive. Such distinction is unnecessary in Vietnamese. The relationship between subject and object of the verb is generally clear from the context and, if it is not, there are ways in which it can be made clear. But, you will find out that in the vast majority of Vietnamese sentences, such clarifying devices are not used. Through constant reading and exposure to the language, you will get the feel of it.

LESSON 36

Grammar Notes

Plural Marker Những

Observe the following two sentences.

Ong mang theo gì?

What did you bring with you?

Ong mang theo những gì?

What did you bring with you?

To answer sentence number two, you should name at least two things.

LESSON 37

Grammar Notes

"Chìm," "to sink," takes no direct object.

Thuyền chìm.

The boat sinks.

Tôi bắn thuyền đó và nửa giờ sau thuyền đó chìm.

I shot the boat and half an hour later it sank.

Ông ấy cứ chìm vì không biết bơi.

He keeps sinking because he does not know how to swim.

Idiomatic Usage

cứ bao lâu lại?

how often...?

Cứ bao lâu lại tiêm trừ tả?

How often does one get a cholera shot?

LESSON 38

Grammar Notes

- A. Observe the position of "...mới...mà...đã..." just... and...already in relation to other words in the following sentence.

Tôi mới gặp cô ấy mà tôi đã không thích rồi.

I just met her and already I don't like her.

mới + verb...mà...đã + verb predicate adjective

- B. "Chẳng" and "không" are synonyms

Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

- |                  |   |                       |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Chậm như sên! | - | Slow as a snail!      |
| 2. Khó như quỷ!  | - | It's devilishly hard! |

## LESSON 39

### Grammar Notes

"Cứ...là..." means "just". "Là" is followed by a subordinate clause.

Cứ cho nó tiền là nó đi ngay.

Just give him the money, and he'll go right away.

Anh cứ gọi là nó đến ngay.

Just call him and he'll come right away.

### Culture Notes

The friendly and informal yes is ừ, used among friends and people of the same age and position. It is also the "yes" used by parents and superiors when talking to children or inferiors. The reverse is unacceptable.

### Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

- |   |   |                               |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. ngủ kỹ                                   | - | to sleep soundly, like a log  |
| 2. Nói là làm. or,<br>Nói gì là làm cái đó. | - | Once I said it, I will do it. |

LESSON 40

Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

1. Có thể thôi à?

Is that all?

2. Không lấy gì làm ngon lắm.

(the food) is not that good.

3. Thế thì hay biết mấy!

How great that would be!

Culture Notes

"Giá" and "nếu" are synonyms and both mean "if". "Giá" is more on the hypothetical side.

Nếu tôi có tiền thì tôi đi.

If I have the money, I will go.

Giá tôi không phải làm thì tôi đi với anh.

If I had not had to work, I would have gone with you.

or: (I wish) I didn't have to work so I could go with you.

LESSON 41

Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

- |                       |   |                                     |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Thê cũng phải.     | - | It's the right thing to...          |
| Làm thê cũng phải.    | - | It's the right thing <u>to do</u> . |
| 2. Xâu hết sức        | - | extremely ugly                      |
| 3. Tôi sẽ cố hết sức. | - | I will do my best.                  |

LESSON 42

Grammar Notes

1. "Mất" and "bi mất" have the same meaning.
2. "Đánh mất" and "làm mất" are used interchangeably, and take a direct object.

Observe the following sentences:

Tôi mất hai quyển sách.

I lost two books.

Here mất implies somebody took or stole the books.

Tôi làm mất hai quyển sách.

I lost two books.

Here làm mất implies the loss was caused by the subject's carelessness.



LESSON 43

Grammar Notes

A. "Là ít" means "at least", and is placed at the end of the sentence.

Họ có năm con là ít.

They have at least five children.

B. "Đấy thôi" is ending particle meaning "simply" or "merely".

Cô ấy nói vậy vì không hiểu anh đấy thôi.

She said that merely because she does not understand you.

Culture Notes

LESSON 44

thì thầm - to whisper, to gossip

We use this verb only to denote rumors, talks exchanged privately and discreetly.

Họ thì thầm là ông tỉnh trưởng biên thủ công quỹ.

They're whispering (gossiping) about the province chief's embezzlement of public funds.

Họ thì thầm là bà ta ly dị chồng.

They're gossiping about her divorce.

## LESSON 45

### Culture Notes

A person who is cục is not only hot-tempered, but has the tendency to be physically violent; he hits people when he gets mad!

### Idioms and Idiomatic Usage

Ăn đòn and ôm đòn are slang. Use them conservatively and only in an informal situation. They both mean to get a good beating.

Nếu muốn ăn đòn thì cứ làm.

If you don't mind a good beating, then go ahead and do it.