

**UOW College Hong Kong / Community College of City University**  
**Student English Enhancement Unit (SEE U)**  
**Daily English Practice**

Week 9

## **#41 Why ‘have you eaten?’ means ‘how are you?’ in Hong Kong**

**Skills/ Objectives: Reading and Speaking**

### **PART 1: Before you read...**

#### **Preparatory questions**

1. How would you respond if (1) your best friend, (2) your teacher, (3) your parents ask “How are you”? Would you respond differently? Why?

#### **Vocabulary**

1. equivalent (adjective): equal to
2. ubiquitous (adjective): to be present everywhere
3. conversely (adverb): in an opposite way of looking at this
4. stilted (adjective): too formal, unnatural
5. utter (verb): to say something

### **PART 2: Article**

In this article, Professor Lisa Lim from the University of Hong Kong discusses the relationship between culture and the Hong Kong greeting “Have you eaten yet”.

**Why ‘have you eaten?’ means ‘how are you?’ in Hong Kong** (*click the read the article*)

<https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/short-reads/article/2038651/why-have-you-eaten-means-how-are-you-hong-kong>

(Source: SCMP)

### **PART 3: Let’s discuss!**

1. What have you learnt from the article about the “Have you eaten yet” greeting and culture? What do you find the most interesting?
2. Based on what is discussed in the article, what is the relationship between language and culture?
3. In the article, Professor Lim discusses “communicative competence” and she refers the term to people’s “ability to connect with others on the basis of shared cultural norms and familiarity with social context and conventions”. Can you think of some the difficulties that one may encounter when he/she interacts with someone from a different cultural background?

#### **PART 4: Speaking**

Interview someone who comes from a different cultural background and ask him/her about their common ways of greeting. Share with us on Moodle!

#### **PART 5: Learn further**

##### **1. Communicative competence**

The webpage explains what communicative competence is.

<https://linguisticator.com/communicative-competence/>

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